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A HOLY CALLING

It is often said that the present social and political revolution largely depends upon economic factors, and thus affects the human community at large, overshadowing all individual considerations. It may equally, however, be maintained that the success of this revolution depends upon the devotion to their ends of a certain militant minority of persons, and will ultimately find its justification, or condemnation, in the personal life of everyone. What is now happening within the Church can be looked at in the same manner from two different angles. It is true, on the one hand, that the present period of Church history is characterised by a renewal of theology as an emphasis on the Church's confession ; by a rediscovery of the lordship of Christ, that is to say of the relationship between the two communities of the Church and of the state, and by a rebuilding of the Church's community itself. The catchword of the moment seems to be community. But, on the other hand, many people, indeed many members of the Federation, would strongly assert that, however fruitful and indispensable this tendency may be, it would endanger our Christian life and stifle our Christian witness, if it

were not balanced by a powerful emphasis on those elements which can be generally defined as problems of personal life.

A great effort has been made, and will continue to be made, in the Federation towards a clearer assessment of our task in the realm of academic life, of politics, and of the Church. The General Committee, meeting last summer, considered these to be continuing and fundamental obligations. But it also called our attention to the need for looking more carefully at another side of our program. One of the working commissions at Whitby studied our responsibility as Christians in the "student milieu". This rather ambitious terminology simply covered a re-awakened concern for the individual student, the man himself, who is sometimes almost forgotten in the midst of our enthusiasm for new ideas and the challenging efforts of reconstruction. We were reminded that our fundamental task is with the brother for whom Christ died, with the daily difficulties he meets, and with the immediate problems he has to solve. Christian stewardship always means pastoral care.

This issue of *The Student World* is concerned with one of these problems. It brings together articles and documents on the basic and inevitable problem of student life: has our Christian faith anything to do with our career? Is there any such thing as a Christian vocation? Does it still mean something today? It is our hope that this attempt will be fruitful in helping some of our student readers in their practical difficulties, and in provoking a wider interchange of ideas and experiences, which would be a real way to build up a truer Christian community.

Р. Н. М.

An Ecumenical Discussion about Laymen, Spearheads and True "Vocation"

SUZANNE DE DIÉTRICH

All those who have taken part in any international Christian meeting have experienced the challenge of the confrontation between differing points of view arising out of a variety of national, cultural and religious backgrounds. This dialogue, written by Suzanne de Diétrich who has had vast experience in ecumenical work, is an example of such an encounter.

Characters of the Dialogue :

BETTY LOU, an American school-teacher.

DWIGHT, also American.

TOM, an English factory inspector.

HEINRICH, a German.

JAMES, a member of the Church of England.

ETIENNE, a Frenchman.

MATTHAI, an Indian.

DAMIANOS, a Greek.

BETTY LOU : I have just come across a pamphlet called *Profession as a Vocation*. Can every profession be conceived as a vocation ? I am not sure it is my vocation to be a teacher. I became one because I didn't see what else I could do !

DWIGHT : What's the idea ?

BETTY LOU : People talk a lot about "laymen being the spearhead of the Church in the world" — standing on the front line and so on. But I don't feel like a spearhead at all when I try to put plain English grammar into the kids' heads. Does this mean I have no sense of vocation ? Or am I a very bad sort of a Christian ?

TOM : I hate all this talk about "every profession a vocation". It is unrealistic. I have worked in a factory and I am now a factory inspector in Newcastle. Do you

think any of the workers has *chosen* his or her job? Wouldn't it be a sinister farce to tell these men that God has called them to do a dirty job while others are kindly invited by the Lord to go and sit in a university? No, these men have to earn a living and support a family. That is the real motive which keeps them going, and it is a sound one, too. If tomorrow they find a better job, they will take it right away.

DWIGHT: We can improve their working conditions. Technical developments allow us to hope that working hours will get shorter and shorter, so that every workman will have leisure enough to cultivate himself and have his private hobby. In the United States we are beginning to think of the day when working time will be cut to thirty hours a week.

TOM: It is to be feared that eighty per cent of humanity will have to go on devoting the major part of their time to some dull job which has to be done to keep us going. Believe me, only the privileged few can afford the luxury of following a "vocation"!

HEINRICH: I am afraid our discussion gets confused because we are using a biblical concept in a secular way. Etymologically, vocation comes from the Latin word *vocatio*. It implies a definite call, a being set apart for a divine purpose.

It is an abuse of terms to apply the word vocation to natural gifts and to speak, for instance, of an artist's "vocation". We may speak of God's call to Abraham, or to Moses, or to Samuel, to Jeremiah or St. Paul...

JAMES: Aren't you taking things a bit literally? It need not be a voice, and God has many ways of revealing His will. Would you limit your notion of vocation to the prophets and apostles?

HEINRICH: No, but there is something unique about their vocation. It is part of God's design of salvation, as revealed in the Scriptures. Today we have to be very careful not to use that word too glibly because we think we see the hand of God while in fact we are carried by

our own imagination or ambition. We Germans have learned to be sober since Hitler and his party claimed to be God's instruments for the salvation of Germany. They were sure of having a God-given "vocation". A similar danger exists in the sects. They claim a special guidance of the Holy Spirit and often talk nonsense.

JAMES: This is the point where your Protestant individualism breaks down. The Church with her strong tradition preserves us from mistaking our impulses for an inspiration of the Spirit. But the fact that there are fools in the world should not prevent us from acknowledging the Spirit when it blows. Don't you believe the vocation of St. Francis or of Livingstone was really from God? Should God have stopped calling people into His service because the canon of Scriptures is closed? Does not the Holy Spirit go on working in His Church?

ETIENNE: Certainly He does. But what matters is our obedience, not the form it takes. Since Jesus Christ came on earth, our one calling is to believe God's great deeds (and this is where the testimony of the Holy Spirit really comes in) and to live a life of obedience and faith, wherever circumstances place us.

God may call us to a specific task. If he does, all right — we must obey. But there is no higher and lower calling. The common vocation of all Christians is to become true children of God and to behave as such. Whether we are a minister or a washerwoman does not matter in the least. The Reformation has laid great stress on the universal priesthood of all believers. The minister is set apart for a certain type of work and trained for it, but this does not put him above others. All we do, according to St. Paul, should be done to the glory of God.

JAMES: Brother Lawrence swept the floor to the glory of God. Sweeping became his vocation, as St. Bernard's was to preach the Gospel!

ETIENNE: Brother Lawrence's vocation was to be an obedient child of God. For him it meant sweeping

the floor, but his service might have taken any other form. The one thing that mattered was that he went on praising the Lord.

JAMES : I would agree with you there.

MATTHAI : Yet the fact that you become a Christian puts new meaning into your work. It may even constrain you to change your profession. When I started my studies I wanted to become a veterinary surgeon. During my vacation I went with a team of students to do social work in a village and saw the appalling misery of the people. I saw the Gospel at work. I decided to become a doctor and to devote my life to rural India. What was a *profession* became a *vocation*.

ETIENNE : Yes, because you took your Christian vocation seriously and decided to devote your life to the service of God and your neighbour. My contention is that so many people wait for a specific call that never comes instead of doing wholeheartedly their humble piece of service.

DWIGHT : Maybe if we had our eyes open to the needs of our fellowmen our decisions would be easier to make. I am afraid I do not want to give up lots of things I would have to give up if I decided to follow God's way.

BETTY LOU : No, it isn't that. I would not mind going anywhere if I were only sure that is the thing I am meant to do ! I find it so difficult to know what God wants me to do in life. Surely He has some plan for me ! Why does He not give us clearer guidance ?

ETIENNE : You want someone to take from you the responsibility for making your own decision. If you are a good teacher, go on with your job, put your heart into it, and don't make a fuss about it.

BETTY LOU : But there are lots of teachers in the United States, and I might be more useful in India.

DWIGHT : That is simple enough. Go to India if you feel that way.

MATTHAI : What matters is to put our life at God's disposal. Tagore uses the image of a musical instrument

we have in India. There is one main string on which the player plays and the other strings vibrate in unison. If we are tuned to God, then our life develops in an harmonious whole and God uses it for His purpose wherever it may be. Jesus spent most of His nights letting Himself be tuned in unison with God. It is our prayer life which tunes our activity so that it may be in keeping with God's purpose.

BETTY LOU : This helps me. But I often do not know how to pray and what to pray for.

MATTHAI : It requires lifelong practice. The less we pray, the less we feel the need for it. But when we have started the practice of meditation, time soon seems too short and we cannot live without it. Then we see our personal problems in their right perspective and their true proportions. Lots of things that we believed to be important lose their importance. "Seek the Kingdom of God and all other things will be given unto you."

DWIGHT : I agree with what you say about the poverty of our prayer life. We in the West have a lot to learn from you. But I do not quite see the relevance of your remark to our discussion.

MATTHAI : The relevance is simply this : it is not what we do but what we are that matters. The mystery of the Incarnation is God's forthcoming, vicarious love. Our vocation is to respond to that love. If we do, occasions to serve Him among our fellowmen will offer themselves without our needing to go out of our way to seek for them. Mankind is starving for lack of love. Where true love is offered, hungry souls will flock to it.

BETTY LOU : You mean that if I really loved the kids in my class I could help them ?

MATTHAI : I am sure you would. And if you pray for each of them regularly, you will approach them in a quite new way.

TOM : But all this should not absolve you from being, technically speaking, as good a teacher as you can. I

know pious teachers who are so busy running church activities and "converting" people that they do not find time to prepare their lessons. In the class room they are as dull as can be. They would soon turn me into a pagan.

ETIENNE : Surely the first duty of a Christian is to do his job properly. Church leaders are inclined to think that a good layman is one who goes to church and runs a Sunday school class, or does the church accounts. They should be more concerned about the way he goes about his job. The layman's field of witness is the class room, the university, the office, the factory.

BETTY LOU : Now I see. This is exactly what my pamphlet is after when it speaks of laymen being "the spearhead of the Church in the world".

TOM : Some ministers are very much aware nowadays of the gulf which separates the Church from the world. I heard a friend of mine in Sheffield tell an active member of his Church that he should have gone to his trade union meeting that evening rather than to the Bible class !

DWIGHT : I sympathise with him. But it is not an unavoidable dilemma. In the States our churches are real centres of community life and lots of activities are run by laymen. It is easy to bring the newcomer to a "social", and later on he may care to come to a service. On the Continent it looks as if the church were only a Sunday affair. We have large Laymen's Movements too, where men of the same profession discuss all kinds of problems and try to apply Christian principles in daily life.

ETIENNE : The old stuff : not cheating your neighbour and all that...

TOM : Not so simple nowadays as you seem to think, especially for business men !

ETIENNE : I do not mean it is easy. I know well enough it is not. But I would like us to see beyond the

individual ethics. What we are trying to think through on the Continent is the place and meaning of science and technics, of art and culture, and so on, in a Christian view of life. Starting with the biblical foundations, you see.

TOM: My only fear is that you Continentals will spend a lifetime laying theological foundations for further action and our civilisation will have died before you are through. Our time may be short. Have you read Toynbee's *Civilisation on Trial*? That does not leave us much time for abstract speculation.

DWIGHT: Nevertheless a Christian medical student should know why he is studying medicine. A lawyer should think through the basis of law before applying it. I would agree so far with Etienne. If we saw clearly how every profession either fits into God's purpose for His world or goes against it, we would have a sound criterion for choosing one profession rather than another, and we would struggle to change or improve its standards. Is not that the layman's specific vocation?

HEINRICH: I wish we could drop that awful word *layman*. It is an utterly misleading one.

ETIENNE: That is true. In plain French *laïc* means secularised. *L'école laïque* for instance means the neutral state school.

JAMES: In England, to be a layman means to be incompetent in a given realm. For instance, medicals discussing medicine would call me a layman.

BETTY LOU: In Church language, then, laymen are incompetent people?

JAMES: Incompetent in theology.

DAMIANOS: In Greece some of our best theologians are laymen. They have a preaching license, they run Sunday schools.

BETTY LOU: What does the clergy do?

DAMIANOS : The centre of our life is the Holy Liturgy. The main task of the priest is the celebration of the Liturgy.

JAMES : For us Anglicans the celebration of the Eucharist is also the centre around which our whole religious life is built. Our response to Christ's offering is that we offer our bodies "a living sacrifice", as St. Paul puts it, on God's altar. This offering includes and sanctifies our daily work. "Here I am to do Thy will." Work is seen as part of our obedience and thus consecrated to God. It becomes as it were an integral part of our worship. I would agree with Etienne that our essential vocation is to be transformed into the likeness of our Lord, to love Him and obey Him. "Love God and do what you like."

ETIENNE : I am afraid I would have to qualify your statement somewhat to make it fully mine, but we are much nearer than I thought.

BETTY LOU : This discussion has cleared my mind somewhat, but we have lost a lot of time quarrelling over words. Couldn't we suggest to the World Council of Churches that they publish an ecumenical dictionary ?

TOM : I would not envy those who would have to prepare it.

BETTY LOU : They could at least tell us what a layman is. They speak of that species now in every report.

HEINRICH : Here again etymology should guide us. *Laicos* comes from *laos* — the people. The Bible speaks a great deal about "the *laos* of God". What is meant is the total community, a people set apart for the service of God.

BETTY LOU : If that is the meaning, we have lost it. Laymen, and still more laywomen, are expected to sit and listen — and collect money for the Church ! The structure of the Church has been thought out and built up by the clergy, a clergy, moreover, solely composed of men...

DWIGHT: Don't generalise too quickly. In our Methodist churches the laity, including women, have a real share in church life.

ETIENNE: Our danger is that we apply the word "vocation" to ministers and missionaries, as if the ordinary member of the Church could be contented with "sitting and listening", as Betty Lou says. I want every Christian man and woman to think of himself or herself as an ambassador of the Church in the world. We bear Christ's name. He has sealed us with His seal. Everything we say and do honours or compromises the King and Kingdom which we serve.

MATTHAI: Even in the younger churches the third or fourth generation is in danger of forgetting the slogan, "Every Christian a missionary", and of leaving the evangelistic task to a few specialised people.

We should come back to the concept of the people of God as a witnessing Body set apart as a whole for one sole purpose: the proclamation in word and deed of God's good news and the gathering of His children, until He comes. This is our main, our common vocation. Within that wider framework, God may call us to specific tasks.

BETTY LOU: Our discussion seems to move in circles! You have answered a few questions I had in my mind and raised a lot of new ones...

TOM: Have you ever seen an ecumenical discussion reach a definite conclusion?

DWIGHT: They are not meant to. They are meant to make us see other points of view than our own. They are meant to help us see our problems in a wider context, the context of God's purpose for His world.

TOM: That's all right as long as we do not remain in the realm of ideas.

DWIGHT: Well, chaps, the dinner bell has rung twice. This is also part of the business of the day. Brings us back to reality, eh, Tom?

Planning a Life

KATHLEEN BLISS

About two years ago there appeared in Great Britain the first full-length life of Albert Schweitzer. I made some comments on it at the time in the *Christian News-Letter*, more especially on the way in which Schweitzer as a young man deliberately set out to plan his life. Endowed with remarkable intellectual gifts, Schweitzer at thirty had an international reputation in philosophy and theology and was a fine organist, an expert on organ building and one of the leading authorities on J. S. Bach. Any one of these fields could have provided him with a lifetime's work and would have brought him a great reputation. However, at thirty he decided to devote his life to the primitive peoples of one of the most unsavoury parts of tropical Africa, and to this end he, a scholar and a professor, became again a student and followed to a successful conclusion the long course of medical training. In 1913 he set sail for Lambaréne on the Congo, and there he still is.

Soon after these notes appeared I had a letter from a young student in the United States. He wrote, "Your remarks about Albert Schweitzer planning his life have caused some concern at this end. The big question is: Can we really dedicate and plan a life? Isn't it true that we can only strengthen ourselves in basic essentials of living and meet the world accordingly?" That seems to me to put the matter in a nutshell. The young American was not asking that Christians should sit on the fence, never committed to anything but always ready to drop down on either side. He was asking for a pattern of Christian committal to fit our times, times not only of an overhanging threat to our civilisation,

but of swift, unpredictable change within our technical society which sweeps us along almost, it seems, without men willing the changes.

The monastic ideal and the lay vocation

From the earliest days the Church has been of divided mind about what constitutes all-out committal to the cause of Christ. Ought a Christian to marry and take upon himself the burdensome responsibility of wife and children? St. Paul was obviously not at ease in his mind about the matter: on the one hand marriage was an honourable estate — could he have compared the relationship of Christ to His Church with human marriage if he had not thought so? — and on the other, it was better for the Kingdom that if possible a man should not marry, for the times were perilous, the end was at hand, and unencumbered service was the primary duty of the Christian. In the Gospels too, the Christ who blessed the children and called men to be like them if they wished to be of His Kingdom, also spoke harshly of family commitments if they prevented a man from “coming after Him” in the quite literal sense of joining His following. As regards a man’s relationship to society and to the state, Gospels and Epistles have in them side by side attitudes both conservative and revolutionary towards law, culture and government.

For the first few hundred years the Church found itself revolutionary rather than conservative, at odds with, rather than at home with society, laws and government. The conversion of Constantine marked a new epoch. What happens to Christian vocation when Christians are no longer a persecuted minority within the state and society but are themselves the rulers and the civil servants? When there is a large overlap of personnel between them, how can the state, society and the Church maintain their separate identities and perform their rightful functions without each usurping the functions of the other? This problem was the stuff

of mediaeval history, never brought to any final conclusion. In the West theoretical debate and trial of arms alike failed to decide which of the "two swords" should control the other, the temporal sword of the Empire or the spiritual sword of the Papacy. Both in state and in Church to rule meant to accommodate oneself to a hundred shifts and compromises. Yet it is doubtful whether the call to the monastic life which many men heard and obeyed was altogether and solely the call of conscience suggesting that politics was a dirty game, trade a doubtful occupation and property a snare. Judging by the political sagacity, the commercial acumen and the administrative capacity exhibited in the cause of the great monastic orders by priors and abbots and their lay underlings, none of these secular activities was reckoned to be inconsistent with the religious life. Indeed, all of the activities of the world — the ownership of property, the employment of labour, engagement in trade and participation in political activity — were taken up into the life of the monastic orders of the West, excepting only marriage, the building of a home and the rearing of children.

The story of the breaking up of the great monastic orders is well enough known. For our present purpose two points need underlining. The popular outcry against the monasteries (as distinct from the attack made on them by Erasmus and his friends for their obscurantism and rejection of the new learning) was chiefly against their wealth. Every pamphleteer making use of the new invention of printing shrieked against the wealthy clerics in the name of the laity. How had all this wealth been accumulated? Not through the failure but out of the success of the monastic ideal — it was left to them by men and women who were not only terrified by the thought of death and hell but had a shrewd idea that here their wealth would be put to fairly good account. The moral of this seems to be that if you succeed in a world-renouncing vocation, you are likely to have worldly responsibilities thrust upon you. The other

point worthy of note is that popular agitation against the monasteries also contained some very strong strictures against the morals of the monks, and the cry was not so much, "Why do they not keep their vows of celibacy?" as, "Why should they not marry and shoulder their responsibilities like other men?" In Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean area where the course of history has run differently, there has recently been voiced the same strong lay feeling. The Union of Professional Men in Greece in a recent widely circulated document poses the question, "Why does the modern man show such an indifference to the ideal of the Christian life?" The answer given is that the Eastern Church has chiefly itself to blame, for it has fostered the idea that the Christian life can only be lived fully by those who withdraw from the responsibilities of family, society and state, and has never attempted to work out a pattern of Christian life for the man living in the world. "The man who kept awake all night in church praying at a night service could not understand the man who was kept awake all night by his crying baby who, for all he knew, might one day become a St. Basil."

It is not surprising that in the West, when the worst bitterness of the religious wars began to abate, there should be both on the Roman Catholic and the Protestant side a new movement of pietism, and that this should show itself in personal living in the world and most particularly in the home. One of the most momentous and least foreseen results of the translation of the Bible into the languages of Europe was a new religious movement based on the home with the Bible read in it. Wesley's "Methodism" was not his invention. The family groups basing their life on the study of the Bible and systematic prayer were widespread before his time, and from them his movement drew much of its strength. Asked to point to any time in history when there really was a lay Christian vocation, a pattern of the Christian life fitted to lay needs, I would unhesitatingly say the period between the wide dissemination of the Bible

in the tongue of the people, made possible by one of the first modern techniques, the invention of printing, and the period of the decline of family living (i. e. the family living as a working and educating group), corresponding to the invention of the internal combustion engine. This home-based pietism was not an end in itself. It had certain important results. Steeped in the thought and language of the Bible, lay men and women, not only but chiefly of the middle classes (remember Robert Burns's cotter read his Bible in his poor home as did the wealthy merchant), went out into the world to live as they read. Religious-minded emigrants carried this way of living with them to the new world. And within the Church the period when this reading of the Bible in the home was at its zenith was the time when the churches were remarkably free from anti-clericalism, or perhaps one should say from that suspicion of the clerical mind by the laity which is a fairly constant feature in history. The reason for this was that the reading of the Bible in the home made a bond between clergy and people, giving them something of a common language and incidentally putting the parson on his mettle to preach a little better than the average parson does today.

The modern monasticism, the missionary movement

The missionary movement which started at the end of the eighteenth century is often spoken of as a modern counterpart of monasticism. It has called for definite self-sacrifice and usually for a lifelong vocation in learning a language, finding one's way to the hearts of an unknown people, and building the beginnings of an indigenous church. For years past those who have wanted to make an all-out committal of their lives to Christian service have at least looked at the possibility of going abroad as missionaries. We all know that any group of Christian students in the West will put a large question mark against any suggestion that the missionary

movement is the best answer to those who want to find a life committal to the cause of Christ. It is not just that the aura of heroism which used to surround the man or woman from the local church, who went to New Guinea or Central Africa and sent back tales of strange wonder, is fading and will fade altogether as the residents of those parts come to our shores in larger numbers and make the remote seem homely. There are deeper questions. Missionary service looks like a life of poverty in which surgeon and evangelist receive the same basic remuneration in terms of need and not of social evaluation, but arriving in Africa or India the missionary finds himself a millionaire. Yet if complete identification with the indigenous population is sought, what happens to the children? Are they robbed of their rightful cultural heritage? Has the missionary movement really solved the problem of reconciling lifelong committal to a religious vocation with the lay vocation of marriage and a family, if parents and children, husband and wife, are to spend years apart? Is this a genuine reconciliation or a makeshift? Again, can the missionary claim that he is living a very different life from the government servant, the teacher, or the doctor and nurse in many parts of the world, since he fills out the same forms and follows much the same routine of daily duty? Since every modern government, independent or colonial, intends to look after the educational, medical and many other needs of its people, would it not be better for missionary activity in medicine and education to try to infiltrate these services with the ideal of Christian service? And finally, what need have those who feel a missionary zeal to go to Africa or India when a secularised society lies all about them as a field for their endeavour?

The "inevitability" of technical society

But these debates are likely to be overtaken by events, even as we stand talking. The great fact of our

age is the universality, if not of the fact of the technical society, of the desire to have it, and of belief in its superiority and its inevitability. This, say the new nations of the East, is the way to lift the burden of grinding poverty and disease from the backs of the suffering millions. It is no use for the West to say, "Look at the dangers of the technical society, look how it has destroyed old communities without building new, has dwarfed the stature of the person under the shadow of the machine, and now threatens us with the hydrogen bomb" — the East sees what techniques have done to raise the standard of living of the ordinary man and is not to be held back (even if the process could be retarded or stopped by any government). The course is set. Now it is quite clear that modern missions have had their greatest triumphs in rural communities among genuine pagans the world over. They have a message which spells the death of the old gods and spirits. But what about the new masses of the great cities and the new race of leaders, the technical men of India and Africa and Communist China?

When we face this problem the differences between East and West grow smaller. The great, and one ought to say in many respects blessed, achievements of the technical society have brought a new hope, a secular idealism, a new messianism. The abolition of disease, of starvation, poverty and ignorance — these, say the men of the technical society are possible ideals realisable by man's endeavour. And since the stupidity and slavery to custom of countless men bar the way to realisation, the newest of the sciences, turning scientific research to man himself and plumbing the secrets of his biological make-up and his sociological context, will in due time remove the barriers which man puts between himself and his own greater happiness. In face of this secular idealism we Christians are ill at ease, chiefly because so many of us *are* secular idealists at heart. What have our little scraps of ontology to say to this glittering and gorgeous prospect? Have we not perhaps a little

nook within it all in which we can work away in the general scheme to educate or heal or breed fatter cows and tougher wheat and pipe our little piece about God from time to time? Let's face it that that is all we may be doing if we think of Christian lay vocation in terms of going along in the technical progression (for there is a progression, though we may dispute about the use of the word progress).

A secular idealism

What is at odds between Christianity and this secular idealism to which techniques give substance? When the process of applying technics to manufacture first began, it was a common belief that the needs of men would be satisfied — that beds and tables, food and drink, books and paper, clothes and shelter would be more cheaply and more quickly made and everyone would have more time, be less tired, healthier, more active and interested in events outside the hard grind to make a living. What was never foreseen was the technical society's capacity to create new needs. All advertising directed at the housewife is based on this simple and monstrous fallacy — that technical devices do absolutely save time and effort. In fact they divert them to the new needs which they suggest. Thus recent figures show that in the United States the city housewife actually spends nearly twenty more hours a week on her work than her rural cousin: the technical society has just raised the level of what is required as "a reasonable standard of comfort". And to more than housewives it seems that the theory that a technical society gives us more time for self-chosen purposes is an illusion.

Long before we have abolished disease and ignorance we shall have had our attention diverted from the inconvenience of tuberculosis to the by then staggering problems raised by our powers over genes and hormones, just as already we look at the gangs of young toughs in their teens who do business with razors and coshes and

wonder whether an age of strict family and social discipline, so recently decried in the name of self expression, could have been such an unmixed evil after all. As Christians we go a long way with secular idealists in their practice : there is nothing essentially more Christian about oil and wine as used by the good Samaritan than about penicillin and a hypodermic syringe, and a whimsical belief in the superiority of homespun methods of healing the sufferings of mankind smacks more of obscurantism than of the mind of Christ. But where the Christian parts company is in the philosophy behind it all. For the secular idealist it is the future which counts and for which he works and sacrifices : the *now* is important because it is the next step to the future. For the Christian the *now* is charged with meaning because it can, if he wills, body forth the eternal, and what he does now to things and persons is governed by the belief that the God who made them did so for purposes which cannot be entirely fulfilled on this earth. "It is expedient", said Caiaphas, weighing the present and the individual against the possible future and the corporate good, "that one man should die for the nation" — and thus with his secular wisdom killed his nation's Redeemer.

Christian vocation in the modern world

It is now time to do some summing up of the argument. It is not possible to escape altogether the technical society in its various manifestations (it should not be identified solely with machines and factories. An equally typical manifestation is the principle of organisation and specialisation.) Go rural or go abroad, it will still be there. It is present in the home ; it has divided the life of the family into separate functions, and what used to be a biological, educational and economic unit is now only the first. The Christian, therefore, as he thinks about vocation has to lay his account with it. Perhaps the first step is to realise that unlike the societies which have preceded it, the technical society is one of constant, evolutionary change. It is always creating new needs

unknown before, and yesterday's luxuries become today's necessities. It makes the possessive more possessive. It sets before the idealist, even more than before the selfseeker, the temptations of power — a little more knowledge and a little more control and one will be able to do this and this for suffering humanity. Willy-nilly one is sucked along in the constant process of trying to catch up on the newest need for oneself or others. Never is there time to think and idle, commune and ponder, enjoy and praise. Even one's prayers are haunted by the thought of what one ought to be doing.

It seems, therefore, as though to live as a Christian in the modern world demands something more than, for example, resolving to act in a Christian way to all whom one meets. We have to face the world with something more positive than that, something as adventurous in its way as was setting out for the South Seas in the middle of the Napoleonic wars to preach the Gospel to cannibals. Though it may not be possible to plan a life with the mid-nineteenth century certainty of a long run, a certain consistency of action which might last a lifetime is perhaps what God wants of us now.

The monastic ideal of the middle ages, the home-rooted pietism of the last two centuries, and the missionary movement all had one thing in common. There was a committal of men to each other in a common life. All were based on something akin to vows which held the company together on a given enterprise. One of the main characteristics of life in the technical society is the transitoriness of human relationships. "I didn't like the way the manager spoke to me so I got another job." "You couldn't expect me to live with my mother-in-law. Why, everyone has a right to a home of his own." It is possible to "get by" over large areas of modern life by being superficially pleasant to people. One of the reasons why modern young people find the lifelong commitment of marriage so difficult is that these lasting and intimate relationships, in which differences cannot be dodged, are out of tune with the general pattern

of relationships in modern society. It may be, therefore, that Christian vocation in the modern world demands a deliberate acceptance of life with tight human ties over a limited range, willingness to stay at one job and live in the place where that work is for long enough — and perhaps a lifetime will be needed — to re-knit the broken threads between local community and working community. It may mean in terms of home life willingness to experiment over a long period with a new pattern of household larger than the biological family.

It seems to me that as Christians we are only at the beginning of understanding who "the God of this world", the secular idealism, the hope (already for some turning to despair) of the common man, is. Thus we are prevented from coming to grips with him. We can see what he does — how the capacity for living in close human communion is being destroyed by a technical society which keeps men continuously on the move. Another manifestation is more difficult to describe and to combat. There has been opened up to the common man a dazzling picture of the infinite possibilities of life. Every new "conquest of nature" announced in the cheap press and illustrated in films and television, seems to put greater powers into the hands of man, to deliver him from the boorish life of submission to natural forces, necessity and chance, and open a door to a life of choice and mastery. But for the great mass of men there is no such change: delivered from bondage to natural forces, they find themselves in the control of that second nature, the world of technics and organisation which man has made. Necessity, not choice, governs most of what they do and especially how they earn their bread. Therefore for Christians some new thinking is demanded. The life of free, unfettered choice is the Greek ideal of the citizen, the secular dream for all men. Are we going to make it the Christian dream also, or have we, out of the living Gospel, something to say about the clay which cannot rear itself against the potter's hand — in all our love of action, some glimpse of the life of passion?

Vocation and Church

PHILIPPE MAURY

It is almost paradoxical to try to write an article on vocation and Church, for in the New Testament these two terms are one and the same. For the New Testament writers it would have been meaningless to discuss the relationship between Christian vocation and the Church, similar to defining today the relationship between conscription and the army. The Church (*ecclesia*) is the community of those who have been called (*kletoi*), those who have received a vocation (*klesis*) from God. In biblical terminology the Church has no significance other than as the fruit of vocation.

But this article does not aim at a biblical study of these terms but rather to look at the way in which Christians, and particularly Christian students, should see their lives as ordered by God's vocation addressed to them. This question is of special importance today when in the Federation we have rediscovered with new vividness the significance and primary importance of our churchmanship, and when we are devoting much time to the study of our responsibility to the ecumenical movement and to the one universal Church.

Three elements are involved in the concept of vocation, the person who calls, the person who is called, and the task to which he is called. In general we are agreed that God and God alone may call us. We are equally certain that we are the objects of the call, which concerns not only our souls but also our minds and our physical existence. The difficult question is, What are we called to? It may be well on this point to look at the New Testament. It seems obvious that in all cases, with one possible exception, the call or vocation is directed

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towards a particular relationship with God. We are "called to be saints" (Rom. 1 : 7) ; we are called "to eternal life" (I Tim. 6 : 12) ; we are called "to be God's children" (I John 3 : 1). Perhaps the most significant of these is the first, "called to be saints". The word "saint" in the biblical sense implies not any moral perfection or mystical status but our situation as people who have been set apart from the rest of men, who belong somewhere else, who have, to use again the New Testament vocabulary, a different citizenship, a new loyalty, an eternal home. This is the fundamental contention of John's Gospel, that though we are by birth, by nature, children of the world, God has come into the world and called us out of it. Our vocation is to come out of the world not by deserting it, not by any spiritual evasion, but by recognising in thought, word and deed that we belong to a new Lord, who is our Caller.

"To everything there is a season"

The term vocation is commonly used in a very different sense. We speak of the vocations of doctor, politician or engineer, and in particular we consider that pastors and priests have been "called" to the ministry. This use of the word vocation, even if it can be justified on certain grounds, tends to hide its fundamental significance. In contrast to the people of Israel, the Church is characterised by the priesthood of all believers ; there is no special call addressed to one group of men which brings them into a closer relationship with God than others ; there is no particular profession which is the most adequate answer to God's call. To speak biblically, we are not called to a profession — we are called to be saints, or more simply, to be Christians. The sixteenth century reformers emphasised strongly that neither clerical life or more particularly monastic life was in any way preferable or religiously better than any other way of life, providing it was commanded by God's vocation.

It is one of the teachings of that rich and mysterious book of Ecclesiastes that "to everything there is a season". God does not want all men to be the same. We are not all called to be ministers, but there is a "season" for all kinds of jobs. In our daily lives we may manifest in an infinite variety of ways that we have received and tried to accept this vocation. When the Apostle Paul speaks of the Church as composed of different members, he does not refer only to the Church's varied ministry, but also in a much wider sense to the fact that there are many different ways of serving God.

Ministry of the Church

It might be said that we have a far too narrow conception of the ministry. The Church, which is not only a spiritual reality but also a visible institution, needs the services of certain "ministers" whose specific responsibility is to nourish the community life of this institution and of the fellowship it embodies: there are ministries of teaching, of pastoral care, of chairmanship, of social service, and many others. But it would be erroneous to assume, as we too often do, either from laziness or complacency with established forms, that those who have assumed these specific responsibilities on behalf of the Church should carry them alone. If we seriously believe that we are all called to be saints, to be God's children, we must also share in the Church's responsibility to teach, to comfort, and to watch over the welfare of all members of the flock.

If this is so, should we not speak of God's vocation as a call addressed to the whole Church rather than in individual terms? It is certain that some people receive from God a special appeal to obey Him and to show forth His glory as ministers, as missionaries, as doctors, and in many other fields. But there has been an unfortunate tendency common in the Church during the last two centuries to express everything in terms of the

individual or of the person. A great deal of romanticism still characterises our Christian thinking about vocation, sometimes going to the extreme of conceiving it as some kind of mysterious and supernatural phenomenon happening in the darkness of the night, as it did in the case of Samuel. Such things do happen, and it would be a denial of God's freedom and disrespect for people who receive such calls to question them. But there is a danger that we tend to limit our conception of vocation to such exceptional cases, and to feel that, if we have not been granted the special privilege of such a call, we are left with an undetermined future which we can shape according to our personal wishes or to social circumstances. In other cases we tend to describe professional life as vocation, thus substituting a semi-secularised notion for a purely religious one in an effort not to be completely deprived of this fundamental relationship with God. In brief, we look at vocation either as a mystical event or a purely ethical concept, whereas it is obvious that while it may take the form of a mystical call and does have an immediate bearing on the ethics of human life, the very substance of it lies at a different level, at the level of the Church.

Within the communion of saints

If the Church is the body of those who have been called, and if to be called by God means to become a member of the Church, there is no vocation except within and towards the Church. This is not a mere pious platitude, but should have serious consequences for our personal life. It means that in recognising and answering God's call we are together, members of one fellowship. If God's call makes us His children, the members of Christ, we are by that same call made members of one another. Christian vocation always creates community, and we cannot look at our vocation independently of other members of the Church. Spiritual individualism is by definition un-Christian. When for

instance we try to answer God's call through our choice of a profession, we must do it within the fellowship of this Church. Moreover, it is not ourselves as individuals, but the Church as a community which must answer the call. A student, when making important professional, personal or political decisions, should share them with the members of his Church or his Student Christian Association in conversation, study and prayer. It may be that in certain cases he will have to sacrifice his personal inclinations, even his personal spiritual convictions, in order to remain truly within the fellowship of the Body of Christ. However, there is no simple rule which can be applied in every case. It would be as dangerous to assume that the Church's insight is always expressed by the congregation or denomination of which we are members as to claim that ultimate judgment of what is right and wrong is our own personal responsibility. The Church and ourselves as individuals are both called to come under the judgment of the Word of God and to receive from it strength and life. This does not apply exclusively to the important decision of the choice of our life work. It is a general precept of Christian life which should be followed whenever we have a choice between various possibilities. The responsibility for our life, the burden of it as well as the joy of it, is not our personal burden or our personal joy, but the burden and the joy of the Church. All this is hard to accept. We have been so deeply rooted in the individualistic tradition of our civilisation that we cannot accept the fact that we do not bear the primary responsibility for our lives. We rebel against such a view exactly as we rebel against God's free redemptive act and try to share in our salvation, either by good deeds or right faith, as we revolt against the good news of Jesus Christ, that He has taken our lives in His hands. We refuse to surrender these same lives to other men, even to the members of the same Church. At this point there is a question of faith, of self-sacrifice to God, as well as of daily discipline.

At this point we should guard against the opposite temptation, to abandon too easily to others what after all remains our task. While it is true that we cannot make the decision by ourselves, it is equally true that we cannot let others make it for us. What we should actually do is to *make* the decision in communion with others. This raises a whole series of questions on what should be the nature of the Church community and the S.C.M. While we often speak of pastoral care, in this connection we are frequently inclined to consider that it is the privilege and exclusive task of the specialists — the ministers. However if we believe that the call of God is addressed to the Church as a whole, if we see ourselves as a “holy priesthood”, we must recognise that pastoral responsibility falls on each one of us, that we are indeed called to be pastors to one another. In relation to vocational choice this implies that each one of us should try to make this decision, not instead of his neighbour, but together with him, as if it were his own, that through the mystery of prayer, the communion of saints in which we believe becomes the essential relationship between us all.

Witnessing in all walks of life

If our vocation is to be shaped within the fellowship of the Church, it must be concerned for the task of the Church. “To everything there is a season,” or in the words of Paul, “Everything is permissible but everything does not build up others” (I Cor. 10 : 23). Our primary consideration must always be the building up of the Church. We must see our vocation in the perspective of God’s plan for His Church, which is that “all mankind may be saved and come to a full knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2 : 4). If our vocation is identical with our churchmanship, it is also identical with the preaching of the Gospel, with the evangelisation of the world. The vocation addressed to Jesus’ disciples and His last instructions to them are a criterion of any Christian

vocation. This does not imply a narrow conception of vocation according to which every Christian should be a professional preacher, but rather that there is no Christian vocation which does not include witnessing to Jesus Christ. There are many different ways to render this witness to our Lord. While the Church needs some people professionally trained for Christian teaching who will spend most of their time announcing the Gospel, it is equally true that both from a sociological and a theological point of view this clerical perspective is unsatisfactory. It is possible to manifest the glory of God and the love of Christ through acts as well as by words, and Jesus Christ, who is Lord not only of the Church but of all creation, can be witnessed to in all walks of life.

One of the most significant rediscoveries of the last decades has been that political activities offer a special opportunity to render witness. The function of the state in relation to the manifestation of Christ's kingship over all mankind is to maintain conditions in which Christian life is possible, and therefore the Christian in politics has a particular responsibility to live according to God's vocation. This new realisation of the relationship between politics and Christian vocation indicates that there must be similar ties to be rediscovered between the various other realms of life and God's plan for the world and for us. Instead of trying to define some moral criteria by which our job can be brought into harmony with the will of God, we should rather try to think through from the point of view of our vocation the relationship between our various activities and the Lordship of Christ over the world.

On the other hand, it has become increasingly obvious, particularly in those European countries which are most directly effected by the contemporary crisis and more completely secularised than others, that the traditional form of the Church's witness through professional clergy is losing its relevance to modern society. A great number of young ministers would assert today that laymen's

witness is infinitely more effective than the preaching and teaching of the clergy. The very fact that they are professionally responsible for such witnessing and are being paid for it seems in some way to sterilise the work of the clergy, whereas the witness of those who share more directly in the life experiences of men commands greater attention and respect. As a result there is a tendency towards a professionalisation of Church work and a greater integration of laity into the essential task of the Church. In other words, when considering our vocation we should think primarily of the ways in which we can share in the Church's witness, in this marvellous task which we have been given to "go and make disciples of all the nations".

Unto the uttermost part of the earth

The ecumenical character of the Church, its oneness and universality, is also important in this connection. Looking first at the Church as the same community over all the earth, without national, racial or social distinctions, we are confronted with the relationship of our vocation to the missionary task of the Church. Perhaps the most distressing phenomenon in the life of the Church today, and especially in the life of the Federation, is that in contrast to the great enthusiasm of the last centuries for the missionary task over all the earth, a more static attitude now prevails, visible tokens of which are the financial difficulties of missionary societies and the lack of adequate missionary personnel. It is particularly sad for us to recognise that S.C.M.s who once were the spearhead of the missionary enterprise now produce so few workers willing to go to overseas mission fields. It is surprising that at a time when the ecumenical nature of the Church is so strongly emphasised, Christians tend to be unconsciously blinded by social and national barriers. While political, economic and cultural conditions contribute to this situation, it is obvious that, for example in Europe, where de-Christianisation

has gone so far and there is such a pressing need for evangelists at home, the task to be carried on abroad loses some of its immediate appeal. When fifty years ago a young Christian became convinced that he must answer God's call by witness to Christ, he went to new fields where the Gospel had never been heard. In 1950 he has to look no further than the next street corner to find people who are ignorant of this Gospel. To be a missionary today may well consist in remaining where we are. But if the Church is one over all the earth, and if our vocation is the responsibility of the Church before it is our own, and if on the other hand our miserable Church is so short of workers to carry on this witnessing task, we must be guided in the choice of our field of action not by our own experience but by the over-all strategy of the Church. This use of the word strategy with regard to our vocation simply implies that we should use the gifts of common sense and intelligence which God has given us to carry on the work of the Church. The missionary responsibility should be considered not as an exceptional form of obedience to a very particular individual call from God Himself, but as the most normal aspect of Christian vocation. At a time when the world is becoming increasingly interdependent, this attitude is even more compelling. It may be that the wise strategy for the Church today would be to transfer most of its forces to new areas in the world, for example to the countries of the younger churches. Anyone who takes seriously the fact that he is called by God to be a member of His Church should be ready to undertake direct missionary work. This does not necessarily mean becoming a professional missionary; in most cases it may mean going abroad in a secular capacity and giving to this work all the attention it deserves, but remembering always that to witness to Christ in this new situation remains the primary concern. Whether one meets isolation, frustration and hardship, or discovers a real home in the community of the younger church, one remains within the wider fellowship of the universal Church.

Finally, Christian vocation is closely related to the ecumenical character of the Church from the point of view of its oneness and of the scandal of the division within it. If the Church is really the creation of God's call and the fellowship of those who have heard this call, to remain apart from one another is to imply that there are different calls, and therefore different gods, or from another viewpoint, to deny that members of other Christian denominations are a part of the Church. One of the implications of the concept of vocation is that we are committed to the ecumenical movement. This effort towards unity does not mean a struggle for uniformity. While there is only one call, there are different ways in which to answer it, and within the same one Church there may be varying forms of churchmanship, in the same way as within one local congregation people may answer God's vocation in various manners, recognising that their different obediences depend on the same call. The Church in its national and international forms must establish such a fellowship, and recognise together that it is constituted in all its parts by the same Lord, Who is addressing to it an eternal vocation.

The Lay Specialist, or The Rediscovery of the Church

HANS HERMANN WALZ

Laymanship as destiny

When we were boys we all aspired to be specialists. Now that we are men, we find that as a result of this intense specialisation in one field we are laymen in all others. We have all contributed our share to the structure of modern life, but none of us is quite at home in this complicated sky-scraper. If the lift goes out of order, we starve on the sixty-third floor, while on the seventeenth the food is going bad because no one can buy it.

We must not condemn the sky-scraper. Before the first World War our fathers dreamed of destroying it and going back to nature. So they tried to pull down the sky-scraper — with partial success. But in the last two decades we have learned that modern man is more at home in a sky-scraper than in a hole in the ground. We have not been brought up in the romantic or anarchistic schools of Rousseau or Bakunin. We prefer a comfortable arm-chair to a tree trunk or the bricks of a ruined house. Of course, ruins have one advantage: they are indestructible — they can be multiplied indefinitely. Houses — even sky-scrapers built of steel and concrete — are vulnerable. Nevertheless, we don't want to live in caves! We can achieve absolute security against destruction only by descending to the level of the amoebae.

Christians are sometimes remarkable for their gift of blindness. They do not see what is going on. Or if they do see, they try to build imaginary wonderlands

of their own. They dream of turning back the wheel of history to the time when there were no machines, to the time of the Reformation, to the "age of mediaeval Christendom", or to the time of the early Church — depending on their personal preferences or theological outlooks. But the big wheel refuses to turn backwards. Those who fling themselves against its spokes only succeed in slowing it down for a moment, until it has gathered sufficient momentum to toss them aside, or crush them to pieces.

We cannot get rid of specialisation now. Moreover, we must specialise still further, unless we prefer to return to the ruins or the cave-dwellings. We shall have to become increasingly specialised, and as a result increasingly amateurish in spheres other than our own. Away from our special machine we shall be quite helpless — completely out of our depth when we get outside our own tiny field of knowledge. The only thing we shall understand will be our own machine, and no one else will understand that as well as we do.

That is the problem. When the world consists entirely of experts, people can no longer understand one another. If we cease to specialise — assuming that to be possible — we must sacrifice our humanity and return to a romantic or nihilistic form of barbarism. It is a vicious circle. We know that we cannot escape it. Here if anywhere lies *la grandeur et la misère* of contemporary man. If we refuse to accept the misery, we shall lose the greatness — even the meaning of life.

The discovery of man

There is much talk today about the rediscovery of the Church. One aspect of this is extremely significant for the most progressive thinkers of our time — even if they have no other interest in the Church: that is the discovery of man which is inherent in the rediscovery of the Church. When we speak of the layman we mean the ordinary man — not *homo sapiens*, not man *an sich*, nor

the marvellously sentimental idea of the "eternal human". We mean man as he really is today. So there may be no confusion with either the classical man of the Greek statues, or with the full-blooded types described in the books of D. H. Lawrence, we shall speak of "lay specialists" when referring to modern man. The lay specialist is the key to the nature of contemporary man, just as in previous ages the key figure was the hermit, the knight, the wealthy, cultured bourgeois, and twenty years ago perhaps, the proletarian.

The lay specialist of today is neither a hero nor a saint. But neither is he a devil, although the devil can and sometimes does succeed in leading him astray. He is a man who is good-hearted, though weak. If he is an extrovert, he is amiable and familiar with everyone. If he is an introvert, he is irresolute and self-indulgent, or worse. He never has a spare moment; he has never learned the art of having time: this is a matter of training and was not included in his curriculum. If after work he has any spare time apart from meals, sleep and the barber, he feels a sort of vacuum and has a bad conscience, which he tries to drug at the cinema. He is afraid of the future — that is why he cannot enjoy the present. He longs for rest — that is why he rushes frantically from one activity to another. Although he meets hundreds of people every day, he is terribly lonely. If he is unmarried, he longs for a mate. If he is married, he plays with the idea of divorce. If he is divorced, he regrets it. Like everyone else, he is an expert at his own job, and no one else can do it properly.

All things considered, there is nothing extraordinary about modern man. There have been people like him in all ages, and probably they have always been in the majority. The difference is that today this ordinary man-in-the-street has become the symbol and norm of the age — and fully realises it! Ortega y Gasset drew attention to this twenty years ago. But today we do not agree with him when he deplores this situation. The lay specialist as a symbol of the age provides at least some

frame of reference for a whole generation which has lost all other standards but not all hope for the future. We must not underestimate the significance of this one remaining orientation point. A centime backed by secure currency is worth more than a ten-pound note that is not guaranteed and may be worth only the paper on which it is printed.

At any rate, these are the people with whom the Church must deal, in so far as it gets in touch with them at all. Those who undertake pastoral care fully realise this, and the religious worker himself, whatever else he may be, does well to realise that he is also that kind of person. This has been asserted most emphatically of all within the Roman Catholic Church. I need only mention George Bernanos and Graham Greene. But I could easily name a dozen other novelists and philosophers and, one should add, teachers of theology. They have gone very deeply into the matter. This Catholic view holds that modern man, even when he is a baptised Christian, often drifts aimlessly along a dead level of mediocrity. Nevertheless he is accompanied by the grace bestowed on him at baptism. But the Church knows that even ordinary men are thus sustained and, moreover, that she has at her disposal this means of support. In this way the Church stands above all the struggles and frustrations of men.

The laymanship of the Church

Protestant ideology has lost sight of this separation because of its emphasis on the Church's solidarity with man. Here the discovery of laymanship is identical with the rediscovery of the Church itself.

I am not speaking here of a new awareness in the Church of its so-called lay element. That did not need rediscovering, for the traditional view was precisely that the Church consisted of two elements — the clergy and the laity. The question of how to adjust the balance between these two groups may have a variety of answers.

Many of the clergy, and some church boards (partly on their own initiative, partly through force of circumstance) have discovered that the laity can be entrusted with tasks which the pastor can no longer perform single-handed. The pastors who have realised this and who have found a few capable helpers are to be congratulated — and so are the men and women who are ready to undertake such service. In addition some “lay” people also think they have made a discovery. They maintain that their church is run by the pastor and that they are not allowed sufficient voice in what goes on, although they maintain the church financially. While these developments are valuable, they may also be dangerous. The Church is in danger not only of becoming clericalised, but also of becoming laicised. The one tendency is as bad as the other, because both are derived from a false distinction which they seek to perpetuate.

But these are not the most crucial developments. The crucial point is rather the rediscovery of the essential “laymanship” of the Church itself, inasmuch as it is regarded as the congregation of believers. Either there are no lay people at all in the Church, because God has written His law in the heart of every member (Jeremiah 31 : 34), or the Church consists entirely of lay people, because “there is none that understands, no, not one” (Romans 3 : 11).

The Church is a gathering of people who apparently have nothing in common ; they have little or no point of contact with one another. There is the business man from the old firm, whose family has been so correct for generations that everything he says or does bears the hall-mark of respectability. What has he in common with the youth in the smart crêpe-soled shoes and loud necktie, whose dandyish appearance marks him immediately as a parvenu ? In the Church we find the conservative farmer and the revolutionary workman, the illiterate man and the scholar. The pacifist and the army general sit side by side at the same service. One member of this strange gathering lives in Texas and another in

Travancore. One is a communist, another has been a nazi, and a third has never strayed from the straight and narrow path of democracy. What have all these people in common? Their human appearance? *That* has not proved a very effective tie between men during the last few decades.

We have all learned in some catechism or other that it is God, the Holy Spirit, which gathers the Church. But have we realised what that means? The Holy Spirit is the sole *raison d'être* for this gathering. There exists no intellectual, moral or political criterion which would select these particular people to form a community. The society which meets under the name of "the Church" is composed of the most absurd and incompatible elements. This gathering of believers cannot possibly have been formed on its own initiative.

Neither can it direct its own course. For none of its members has learned what is necessary for leading a community of this kind. They can only wait and see whether they will be guided, in the same way as they were originally called together, and whether something will be said to them which they can all understand, even though they can hardly understand one another. That is the "laymanship" of the Church — completely dependent upon the Word of God, without any meaning unless that Word is given.

But is this not a gross exaggeration? Is not the Church something far more glorious than this poor collection of lay people, none of whom knows how to proceed? Is not the Church the Body of Christ? It certainly is. But it is the Body of Christ on earth — the Body of which it is said: "His form was marred more than that of other men" (Isaiah 52: 14). It is the Body which broke under the weight of the Cross. It is the Body which "can only bring forth fruit if it fall into the ground and die, like a grain of wheat" (John 12: 24). If this shapeless mass can give rise to a form that is eternal, if death can give birth to life, this is not due to vitality within the body itself. It cannot be attributed

to the efforts of the laity assembled there. It is the action of Him "Who can make the dead live, and speaks His Word to those who are yet unborn" (Romans 4 : 17) ¹.

God's promise to the laity

It is one of the most astonishing things in the Bible that it does not tell us first of all what we ought to *do*, but rather shows us where we are and who we are. It is through this laymanship that God's promise to the Church will be fulfilled.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5 : 3). This promise is made to the Church as an assembly of lay people. The real Church consists of people who have lost their way, people who — through force of circumstance — can hardly be counted among the "pious". The Church is made up of the "sick" people of whom Jesus speaks — the lost and scattered sheep without a shepherd — those people to whom I alluded in earlier sections of this article. It is to them, and to people like them, that God has given His promise.

But what are we to do, all we laymen in the Church ? Are we to throw up our secular occupations and go out as missionaries and evangelists ? For some, this will be the right course to take. Are we to return to school and study theology, if we have not already done so ? Others will be led to do this. Or shall we try to blow up the walls of the prison in which we work, to discover the link between its many specialised departments and their real significance, and thus help to think out and teach a Christian view of life ? A few people will feel this to be their task. But what about all the others ?

The primary thing is not our own task. It is God's invitation to come — with all those who are weary and heavy laden — to taste and see that the yoke laid upon our shoulders is easy and the burden is light. Only if

¹ Translation by J. B. Phillips in *Letters to Young Churches*, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1947.

we discover the truth in this promise and see that it really applies to us in our personal situation, can we understand the other things which must be said.

The many lay specialists living as Christians in various parts of the world today will certainly not build the Kingdom of God on earth. That branch of architecture was not included in their curriculum. They will not be able to answer many of the questions outside their own field, whether those questions arise in their own minds or are put by other people. The pastor is bound to be scandalised sometimes by their ignorance of the most rudimentary theological matters. The evangelist who knocks at their door and asks whether they have been converted may receive no reply. But they will be certain of one thing — so irrevocably certain that some have already died for that belief, and others will follow them: that they have a Master to Whom they belong with all they are, all they have and all they can do. They have very little and they cannot do much. But there is one thing that they *can* do: they are experts at their own job. And since this job claims their whole day from eight in the morning till six in the evening, surely it is this most of all that they will want to place at their Master's service. How can they do this? This opens up a new question, in America and Germany, in South India and Greece, in Czechoslovakia and Holland.

Can these one-sided specialists really serve God? They certainly can. They cannot build the Kingdom of Heaven, but they can help to make this world a little more livable. Their training has taught them how, and for that purpose God will use them. For He wants this world. He loves it. The engineers and workers can rest assured that their work has its place in God's plan, and that it is never done in vain if it is done for Him — and not for the little men who often make our lives miserable and prevent us from being a "success".

In serving God they can remain indifferent to the praise or blame of men; but they can never be indifferent

to the men themselves. God wills that men should serve Him by serving the humblest of their brethren. God Himself needs nothing. But He wants to pass on even to the lowliest of men what their brothers wish to give to Him. They have many needs : clothes and shoes and a roof over their heads ; food and drink ; happiness and recreation ; security and order ; peace and justice. There is plenty of work for the experts in every field ! But what people need most of all, and in all, is love. That is not manufactured by specialists. But each particular job may be a product of love, whether it be a well-swept street or a well-governed state.

There is therefore some purpose in having special groups within the congregation of believers, united only by the fact that they are listening together. Here the specialists meet to listen again and again to the Word that speaks to all men. Here they ask each other how in their particular work they can serve their brethren by helping to make the world more habitable and more human. It is a truly ecumenical task to bring together specialists and groups of specialists of this kind. They will see then that in their hard struggle to serve God in the world they have the support of the whole Church — that they are in fact the direct representatives of the Church when they are guided by Christian principles in making technical decisions. Because of the highly specialised nature of the contemporary world, Christian social ethics, which are so much discussed in the Church today, will not be worked out by great scholars. They will be discovered by those specialised laymen who are groping their way forward, scarcely able to see more than one step at a time, but who are prepared, whatever happens, to take their next step in obedience to the will of God.

Vocation and Profession

JOHN KAREFA-SMART

Vocation is fundamentally the vertical aspect of man's life. It is the response which he gives to the call of God. There can be only one Christian vocation, namely, holy obedience. In the words of Paul, the Christian is by vocation "a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ", and an apostle, the bearer of His Master's message. This obedience is the only response compatible with the unalterable fact that Jesus is Lord, and when the Christian makes this response, "My Lord and my God", he has found his true vocation. In this he is at one with all other Christians, for we are all of one calling.

Profession, on the other hand, is the horizontal aspect of man's life, and represents the individual's response to the need which society has for his talent and training. Christians, therefore, may differ in their choice of a profession. To the Christian his profession is fundamentally the channel through which he obeys the command to "Follow thou Me" and "Feed My sheep". Through his profession he serves his Master by serving his fellow men.

Because it usually involves the discipline of long training in some branch of the arts, humanities or sciences, the Christian student must attach great importance to his choice of a profession. Here in West Africa, for example, it is common for parents or guardians to choose their children's professions, and very often the choice depends on calculations of speedy financial return of the money spent on the period of training. The result is that there are far too many lawyers, and the number of doctors, although still not sufficient to meet the need, is much out of proportion to the number of agriculturalists and social workers.

The choice of a profession

The Christian student in West Africa is therefore challenged to bring the idea of stewardship of talent into the choice of a profession. His choice must be conducive to the fullest development of whatever natural abilities and aptitudes he may possess, while at the same time it must be made in obedience to the will of God for *his* life, with particular reference to the need around him and not to the possibility of financial success. The idea of stewardship implies that the God-given gifts of character, natural ability, and technical aptitude and skill are neither to be wasted in the profligate living of an irresponsible and prodigal son (Luke 15 : 13-32), nor wrapped in a napkin and buried in the unimaginative spirit of the unwise steward (Matthew 25 : 14-30).

Previous discussions in *The Student World* have already emphasised sufficiently that the years at the university must be spent not only in developing and training the student's natural gifts of mind and body and in acquiring the knowledge necessary for the best use of these gifts, but also in acquiring "a sense of context". The student must try to see not only how the choice he makes fits him for service to society, but also how this service builds upon the foundations of the past and prepares the way for those who will follow him in the future.

To illustrate again from West Africa, the Christian student who is training to be an engineer must see that the roads and towns which he will build will not only help to bring the advantages of modern communications and better housing to his people, but also will be the means whereby they, through partaking of a fuller life, will at the same time be more able to make their contribution as a self-governing people to the life of the rest of the world.

Another implication of this sense of context is that, in particular cultural environments, the Christian student will have to give up certain professions, no matter how

interesting they may be to him as an individual. The Christian student in West Africa, for instance, can hardly be said to have chosen wisely if he decides on astronomy as a profession and pursues this study to the point where he needs to reside in a western country where he can have access to special telescopes in the great observatories. With only a slight modification of his natural bent towards the study of celestial bodies he could become a meteorologist in his own country, one of the team of specialists necessary for the maximum development of agriculture and communications.

Another temptation must be overcome — that of choosing easy paths to academic distinction through what American students call “snap courses”, in which, with a minimum of mental exertion, success is guaranteed. Or there may be the temptation to choose courses which are popular for one reason or another, most often because of the personal charm of the instructor. These criteria do not meet the standards of a stewardship either of the opportunity to attend the university or of the developing of natural aptitudes, and must therefore be rejected.

In the choice of professional training a very important question arises. If we are right in our interpretation of Christian vocation, are there any professions which are, by their very nature, incompatible with Christian obedience? It might be relatively easy to rule out at once some professions, the pursuit of which inevitably ends in the destruction of other human lives or in the blighting of character, but it could also be argued that often it is not the profession itself that is incompatible with Christian obedience, but the motivation of those who practice it.

It might be helpful to illustrate from personal experience. The medical profession is one that is universally regarded as laudable, and it is easy to become eloquent about how closely the medical practitioner walks in the steps of the Master Who went about healing the sick. But I can remember conversations with fellow medical

students which revealed that one does not always choose to be a doctor for reasons other than making a fortune as quickly as possible in a most respectable manner. And when one is in actual practice, one discovers that there are things a doctor could do with the perfect approval of the profession as a whole that he could not do with a free Christian conscience. And there are other matters, fee schedules for example, in which action dictated by a sense of Christian obedience might run him afoul of the existing codes of practice in his particular locality.

Obedience and stewardship

At the completion of the years of university training, are there any principles which can serve as a guide to continued obedience and stewardship? I suggest the following:

1. Christian professional action springs from a daily renewing of the act of consecration. Personal prayer, Bible study and family devotions, as well as the corporate worship of the Christian community of which one is a part, are all means whereby this renewal takes place. Christian action is the spontaneous harvest of the discipline of the devotional period.

2. No Christian service has been performed if no human need has been met. The Christian in professional work must always remember that the final criterion of his obedience is not the attainment or lack of attainment of high professional standards, or the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, or the profundity of scientific research, but whether or not some one of the least of God's children was hungry and received food, or was sick and was visited, or was imprisoned by the cares and concerns of this material life and was released (Matthew 25: 31-46).

3. The Christian community has an important claim on the services of the Christian in professional life. The call to the life of obedience does not come to the

Christian by himself, with no reference to the community of other Christians. The Church, which we regard as synonymous with the Christian community, exists as part of God's answer to our prayers that "Thy will be done in earth, as in heaven", and in its corporate life it must use all the talents and abilities of its various members, each ministering according to his own gifts (Romans 12 : 6-8). It is because the Christian community has largely been deprived of this differentiated ministry and has erected the artificial and non-Christian difference between the clerical and the lay professions, that its message has been sterile in some areas of western industrial and professional life. The Christian farmer, chief, physician, school teacher and housewife must once again feel equal responsibility with the Christian preacher in preparing for the Kingdom of God on earth.

I should like to pursue this point further with particular reference to Christian missions. There are increasing fears in some quarters that "professional" missionaries will no longer be welcome in many parts of the world which are now or soon will be throwing off the yoke of foreign imperialism. But wherever there is already the nucleus of an indigenous Christian community, the services of any Christian from another country will always be welcome, if they are related to the life and witness of the Christian community. In this connection Canon Warren in his *Church Missionary Society News-Letter* for January, 1950, describes as a possible "third order" :

... the idea of Christian men and women going out to secular employment in such countries, but going out determined to identify themselves with the Christian Church of these lands, banded together by some association which would help to strengthen them in their individual and corporate Christian witness, even accepting the obligation of receiving before sailing, or at least on their first leave, some serious Christian training for their witness while abroad. This, of course, is in one sense only a development of what countless

Christian soldiers, administrators, embassy and consular officials, and business men have done in the past. But it is a development, and one which, consciously rather than haphazardly pursued, may prove to be a vital part of the Christian witness in days ahead, when in some countries at any rate the work of the "professional" missionary may become impossible...

Here in West Africa a Christian member of the colonial government civil service who carried out his duties as education officer, organiser of cooperatives, labour officer or welfare officer, with the Christian "sense of context" already referred to, and identified himself with the local body of Christians could be in every sense as real a missionary as someone commissioned by a missionary society.

The fellowship of disciples

In conclusion, the frontiers of evangelisation reach across each profession. The message of the possibility of a new and purposeful life in Christ Jesus is a message which can best be brought to those who are still groping in the purposeless labyrinths of the old life by their colleagues who, at least metaphorically, speak the same language. The greatest possible advance in the Church in this generation will probably come about only when the importance of this kind of evangelisation is appreciated. Not only as individual members of the professions, but as groups of Christians within the professions, witness must be borne, by word of mouth and by example, to the transforming power of the love of God in Christ Jesus.

This internal evangelisation, while vitally important, should, I believe, not be carried on by the formal organisation of groups of professional men who pose as the spiritual betters of their colleagues. There must be fellowship, but it should preferably be the fellowship of the "Christian cell" which, while it seeks internal unity

by prayer and sharing of experience, is at the same time unobtrusively but effectively at work like the leaven hidden within a lump of dough. Thus, for example, the organisation by a few Christian doctors of a Christian medical association might be a less effective method of witnessing to their colleagues than the cultivation of the deeper fellowship of a "cell" of Christian doctors within the framework of the already organised regional medical association.

I have tried to describe the relationship between a Christian sense of vocation and of profession, when the two terms are not, as so often, used synonymously. They are both only aspects of the single Christian duty of *discipleship*, in which each obeys the call from God by himself, and the whole company of believers is also obedient to God's will. Thus in serving the needs of fellow men and women, each according to his ability, and in witnessing to the power of God to change and invigorate human life, they shall indeed be a redemptive fellowship, co-partners together with their Lord and Master in saving the world.

Charity and Witness

WILLIAM S. ELLIS

During recent months there has been widespread discussion within the Federation with regard to our participation in World Student Relief. While some Federation members have emphasised that charity implies witness, that relief should always aim at evangelism, others have maintained that charity does not need to be justified by any other consideration, that relief carried on through a secular organisation like W.S.R. is a perfectly valid form of Christian charity. The article which follows is the substance of a speech on this problem delivered by William S. Ellis at the Federation Summer Conference at Bowling Green, Ohio, U.S.A., in August 1949. As the author himself defined it, it does not aim at giving a definite answer to this dilemma but at showing that there is no answer except in Jesus Christ Himself.

Christ the Incarnation of the love of God

The word charity refers in its deepest sense to *agape*, God's love descending in the person of the Lord that He might through His blood and suffering atone for the sins of all men. Christ, nailed to the Cross, is explainable only in terms of this love, transcending the law and justice of the Old Testament and revealing itself in the giving of Him for the sinners of the world. Christ is the Incarnation of the love of God. This is the key to His character. In this sense His body and His blood are the answer, the only answer to Himself. The first and second commandments which we are required to obey if we follow Him provide only a partial explanation, for He loved His Father and His neighbour, but went further and gave Himself for those who were, are, and

will be sinners, for those who had denied the will of His Father. Nor can He be understood totally in terms of the justice of the Old Testament. Such words as "Thou shalt forgive thy brother seventy times seven", and "Thou shalt love thy enemy and bless them that curse you", are illogical and irrational. We are driven into a position where the irrationality of the Christ makes justice an illogicality, where it becomes a question of either justice or the Christ.

The life of the Christ is the concrete fulfilment and perfect example of the love of the Father. The Gospel is the norm by which we can see His love working among the lowly of the earth. We see Him among the sick, the hungry, the diseased, the naked, and the weary. His help is refused to no one who is in need. To some He gives food, to others health, but to all His love and the Word of God. However His witness is made, it is not the act which is important but the spirit motivating the act and ensuring its rightness. "And if I have prophetic powers and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I gain nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing." The poor widow, casting in the two mites, is closer to God than the rich donating to the accompaniment of bells. Acts, prophecy and faith, important as they are, draw their ultimate value from their relationship to the love of God.

A dynamic love

Christ is the Son and we the children of God. Thus every man is a brother to his fellow men. For this reason we not only help the poor and sick, but bless our enemies. In the eyes of God hostility and enmity are secondary to His love which was in the beginning, created heaven and earth, gave us the Christ, and made each the brother of all and all the brother of each.

The love of God for us is without limitations and endures forever. He gave Himself for all men and the

Church is a witness to the eternity of His love. As this love is spontaneous and uncaused, so in the same manner the love demanded of us in the first and second commandments is spontaneous and uncaused, deriving not from any self-love, but rather from the fact that Christ is in us.

The love of God as revealed in Christ is an active, dynamic and expanding force which impels us to work among men in manifold ways. Christ as the response of God to the suffering of men is a continuously expanding power, pregnant with the seeds of revolution. It is a power which fires each generation to new revolt against the insufficient efforts of its fathers and to a renewed dedication, which because of its very undramatic and bloodless way requires unparalleled allegiance, and because of its promise of both nothing and everything presents limitless boundaries. The love of God in its true tradition is the most dynamic concept of our civilisation. Its symbol is the Cross under a turbulent sky before an angry mob.

The love of Christ forces the conclusion that charity necessitates witness, without which charity is incomplete. As His love impelled Him to give Himself, we too are called to give ourselves as unselfishly in devoted service to the Father. To love Him is to serve Him. To love Him is to witness.

Witness is the complete surrender, the conscious and unconscious giving of self at all times to the will of the Almighty Father as revealed through the Lord Jesus Christ. It includes every deed, word and thought of a Christian's life, and is opposed to the attitude which suggests or assumes that witness is made simply by a particular act at a particular time, or through the use of certain words during a certain act. Witness may include the particular, but the particular alone is not witness.

This witness can be made only on the basis of human need. The question of merit does not enter into the actions of God's *agape*. The words of the Christ against the righteousness of the Pharisees, His work among the

sinners and publicans reveal a love indifferent to merit, spontaneous, uncaused, and unselfish. Moreover merit itself can mean little to the Christian whose life has a value not originally or inherently possessed or acquired but rather received as the object of God's love. Witness flowing from *agape* knows of no human merit despite its prevalence in the world today, both in the Church and in certain political parties.

In actual practice the type of witness made is determined by the nature of the need. A mother weeping for her sick child may ask only for the prayers of her friends ; a man mourning, for an understanding word ; a man ashamed and disgraced, for a word of hope ; a hungry man, for food ; a sick man, for medicine or a visit ; a weary man, for rest ; a tormented man, for peace ; a naked man, for clothes ; a church weak or persecuted, for prayer.

Every Christian, regardless of his practical means, can make a witness whether it be in his family, university, vocation, community, church or country. Witnessing does not always refer to people three thousand miles away, for the value of one's witness to distant strangers is often more strongly determined by witness in one's immediate situation than by any other factor. This point cannot be too strongly stressed, for the tendency of some Christians to be preoccupied with witnessing among strangers abroad is too often a very convenient, conscious or unconscious means of avoiding witness in an immediate situation where they should shoulder responsibility. Witnessing at a distance, if not complemented by an immediate witness, all too often results in a romanticism and impersonality which are deceptive and dangerous. Of course this cannot be applied to the missionary who is witnessing in his immediate situation though thousands of miles from his motherland.

Meeting human needs

In a world where the cries of the needy rise so continually in a baleful chorus as to deaden us to suffering,

where each group tends to exaggerate its own need, where the donors themselves are often dominated by all too human preferences, where some witnessing becomes the handmaid of self-interest, where the love of the individual inevitably becomes distorted and objectivised by the impersonality of organisation and the violence around us, where the fathomless depths of our love are countered by the shallowness of our material resources, and where we ourselves are guilty of sin, there is no standard solution except selfless giving to the many practical problems of witness.

In general, the individual Christian will witness according to the need and his resources, balancing the two factors before making any decision. In one case he may donate money to a drive; in another give his time and effort to some cause such as the missionary movement, and in another visit the sick and aid the poor.

Charity and relief organisations

However, to generalise realistically about witnessing through an organisation is well nigh impossible. The necessity of responding to unparalleled needs in lands across the seas has resulted in the creation of many secular and religious organisations through which individual donations are channelled in an effort to meet these needs. In addition, large scale secular organisations have assumed much of the former work of the Church. This trend has in the past and still does present the individual Christian and the Church with many involved problems.

From a strictly technical point of view, organisation often imposes certain characteristics which qualify, limit, and in extreme cases change its original purpose. The self-interest of the organisation *per se* may unconsciously loom more important than the reason for its creation. This can happen in any organisation — including the Church — with the result that the original purpose is

considered valid for the individual but not for the organisation, which becomes an end in itself. Christians must safeguard against this tendency in both secular and religious organisations lest their witness become distorted. To be specific, though the Church and its agencies must meet standards of finance and efficiency, their primary purpose is to be the Body of Christ. Thus, their only self-interest is to the Christ, and there can be no distinction between the requirements imposed by charity on the Church and on the individual. The Church must not become a law unto itself, but be a means, as is the individual, in the service of Christ.

From a Christian point of view the principal problem appears to be the encroachment of secular organisations on the domain of the Church. Some Christians feel that through a donation to a secular organisation they have fulfilled their witness. This might be called "a lazy witness", and could of course be applied as well to a donation to a religious foundation. More fundamentally, however, some claim that the Church and Christians when they give through secular channels receive no credit for their motivation — the recipient of relief from these organisations does not realise he is the beneficiary of a Christian gift and is not grateful for the Gospel which prompted it. Therefore some would favour religious relief organisations where all work is done specifically in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus becomes a form of evangelism.

The first problem posed by this approach is the question of credit — are *agape* and credit compatible? While the first is spontaneous and uncaused, credit suggests either that as men we have done something laudable and should be thanked, or that Christ should receive gratitude for what has been done. The incompatibility suggested between *agape* and credit may cause the latter to change the nature of the former, so that the witness is not that of the love of God and Christ but of ourselves and our particular conception of Christ. For instance, if we work only among those who appreciate

our efforts and motivation, is not the basis for distribution need *and* appreciation, rather than simply need? Secondly, if some refuse to accept our particular witness because of the appreciation expected, are we helping our enemy as well as our brother? I believe that if the purpose of a secular organisation, even though not deriving from charity, is to aid some group of fellow men, and that if the work is done on the basis of need, the Christian can and should cooperate. He has no right to expect credit, for he is only the vessel of God. He himself knows why he makes his witness. This is sufficient, for God, not his fellow men, is the ultimate judge.

I doubt whether individuals or the Church have to say to the recipient that they give in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no rule for this in the Gospel as Christ works among the disinherited. Moreover the consciousness of such an act may cause pride which may turn away the recipient. Also, God works in too mysterious a way to guarantee that such words will evoke an understanding of the love of Christ. The gratitude may more often be for the material thing than for the Christ. Indeed, since the entire life of a Christian is a witness, the example of his life is more potent than any other factor. A Christian with a deep sense of the nearness of Christ cannot divorce this from his language and words, even his humour. He tends to bring it into his entire conversation, unconsciously and thus more naturally. This is done in the true spirit of charity for nothing is expected. It is the result of love and does not degenerate into a formula. However, each must decide this question for himself as the situation and the love of Christ so prompt him. There is no absolute rule.

In brief, the problem of witnessing is a relative one determined by the nature of charity. Witness should be made spontaneously and without cause on the basis of need, in terms of the different types of need. In no circumstances must practical considerations lead to the compromising of charity. This indeed is the only rule for witness that can be specifically stated.

The fruits of charity

One might wonder whether anything can be expected from witness and if witness implies charity. Witness from a material point of view may create the conditions by which the love of Christ is not frustrated. We must stress that though men do not live by bread alone, the Bread of Life must be accompanied by the bread of the body. The material conditions of men can be so poor, their suffering so intense, that life is without meaning and frustrates the Way of the Word. Our witness may in some way alleviate these conditions so the recipient will take hope, work to aid himself, and perhaps receive the Word of God. In my opinion, given the great need of the world and the limited resources of the Church, no more can be expected. For the reconstruction of society and the elimination of needs caused by inherent injustices in a system, the Christian must make his witness in government.

True witness gives dignity to the individual, not because he possesses some inherent value or is given adequate material resources, but rather because he is the object of the love of Christ flowing through us. In this sense *agape* is a creative love which transforms every object it touches and gives it a value for both the recipient and his fellow men. This creative function of charity has in the last two centuries been secularised in terms of the innate dignity of man and the love of man for man, but it is important today when great stress is placed on material resources, and rightly so, that we should state more strongly than ever that dignity comes from being the object of God's love.

If we regard witness as doing anything fundamental in a material way or as separated from the love of Christ, we will be doubly disappointed. The meagerness of the material aid will be painfully evident, and its true value, love, will be lost. The most important factor in witnessing is the love of Christ which prompts the act and is felt by the recipient. It is this love flowing through us

which touches the individual and gives him dignity as a child of God. Once this divine spark has been planted in the heart of man, hope has been given.

Whether this hope leads to faith and love is an unanswerable question. Hope once given can lead into many positive channels which will aid the individual materially, spiritually and morally. There are too many factors involved to state categorically that this hope will lead to Christ. However, the Christian has witnessed. Nothing more is to be expected.

No expectations

To expect anything in witness would be illogical: if we accept the spontaneous and uncaused nature of charity, the question of expectation introduces cause into a causeless love. The latter part of Matthew 24 is of disturbing relevance at this point. Those who thought they had served Him — and surely they must have tried in their human way — were the cursed, and those who considered they had done too little were accepted. The love, not the works, of the cursed and the righteous is the only answer to this judgment. This parable presents a most penetrating paradox of charity, that while we are called to witness, nothing is guaranteed from this witness, not even our own salvation. If this is true of our love for Christ, how much more true is it of the witness flowing from that love. Rather than worrying about what we may expect from witnessing, it would be more relevant to wonder if we can ever serve Him. I realise that this strikes very deeply at our pride, for we do not wish to admit that nothing is guaranteed except the love of Christ, our only absolute. This causes us to buttress theologically and in other ways our sense of insecurity, but this is pride and goes the way of all pride.

Yet this paradox is the stumbling block and the glory of our faith, for it introduces a tension which can either repel or inspire us. If Christ is forgotten and

only the uncertainty seen, we can shrink in despair from our commitment and find security in the absoluteness of the relative and the insecurity of sin. On the other hand, if Christ is remembered with the uncertainty our charity and witness become a challenge to each Christian and each generation. Our greatest efforts will be inadequate. We will go on and on, without laurels here, doing our human best, realising it is insufficient, renewing our faith in Christ, and asking forgiveness for our sins. If we are afraid, this paradox is our stumbling block ; if we are courageous, it is our glory ; if we are human, it is both, I dare to say — let it be our glory.

What is to be expected in witness ? On the one hand, nothing, on the other, everything — that the Church will promulgate its message throughout the world, that it will be rejuvenated and strengthened, that men as brothers will come to believe in the greatest power, the abnegation of power, the love of Christ, that the Word through the Church will smash curtain and boundary and bring all men in love to their knees before Him, that He will one day rule in His glory all the world.

THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

On Vocation — Some Letters

The following are extracts from several letters to the editor.

Dear Philippe,

What I have to say about the concept of Christian vocation is really very simple and very practical and, I think, something which badly needs to be said, at least in terms of the student Christian enterprise in the United States.

In a foreign country one is able to see his own country in a much different light and often from a clearer perspective. And so it is that, in these several months in which I have been living in England, I have thought much about the American S.C.M. and the position of Christian students in American university life and in reference to the life of the Church in the United States.

Out of this musing has come one thought which distresses me more than any other. Let me put it in terms of my own experience and thus more directly, for I am inclined to feel that my experience in this case has been similar to that of scores if not hundreds of my fellow American students.

I have survived the experience of university life with certain convictions about the Christian faith and about the compulsion upon those who accept this faith to reconcile every phase of their life to the Gospel — or at least to their deepest understanding of the Gospel.

Indeed it was through the S.C.M. that the whole idea of Christian vocation in the secular fields was first made vivid for me. At conference after conference I have heard it proclaimed. In discussion after discussion the image has been set before me that there is a Christian vocation in politics and law, in medicine and nursing, in business and journalism, in industrial life and agriculture.

It is the responsibility of each who accepts Christ as Lord to appraise the gifts, the abilities, the interests, the resources,

the opportunities, the shortcomings, the weaknesses which are his as honestly as he can, and to make the decision of what his vocation is to be in terms of such a careful and prayerful analysis. And for each Christian there is a sense in which his life-work, his vocation — however simple or complex it may be — is a ministry, the central means through which he serves his Lord.

Moreover, this implies that there is no such thing as a hierarchy of vocations — no such thing as one Christian having a “higher” calling than another. It implies that it is possible to serve the Lord fully and devotedly not only as a priest, a missionary, or an S.C.M. staff member, but also as a teacher, a juggler, or a politician.

These are some of the things of which I have been assured and which I have come to accept as valid through my exposure to the S.C.M. while in the university.

My own impression is that the S.C.M. has done and is doing today a far more competent and complete job of proclaiming the concept of Christian vocation than the churches have often done.

And yet what has really happened ?

On the one hand, this idea of Christian vocation has been forcefully proclaimed by the preaching minister ever since the days of Paul, but, on the other, it has in fact tended to become a romantic notion which few, today at least, take seriously after they leave the S.C.M. and return to a society of brutal competition, of self-centered emphasis, in which an authentic Christian layman is — or seems to be — a very rare specimen indeed.

I will contend that this concept of Christian vocation has not been taken seriously — or that those who have accepted it while in the S.C.M. have in many events later forsaken it — because it has only been genuinely tested in the monastic life, the priesthood and the preaching ministry, in the missionary vocations, and in certain fields of “professional” Christian work and social service.

Where can the young Christian who is to enter industrial work find guidance in the preparation for his ministry ? Where can the Christian youth who will spend his life in agriculture discover resources that are helpful in sustaining him in his voca-

tion? Where can the Christian student — armed with a law degree and a healthy zeal to make the world more tolerable — receive assistance in working out the intricacies of the concept of Christian vocation in such a barbarous and secular field as politics?

My opinion is that the churches, the Student Christian Movements and the Christian youth organisations stand under a heavy and severe indictment for at once proclaiming this concept of Christian vocation and yet failing, on the whole, to assume conscientiously the task of providing for each new generation of Christians some store — incomplete though this might be in itself — of past experience and understanding in the application of the concept of Christian vocation in such fields as industrial work and management, agriculture, and law and politics.

I concede that in each generation a few exceptional men and women will develop a full and creative vocation in the secular fields and yet retain their essential integrity as Christians. My concern is with the rest of us — the many unexceptional men and women who may be lost, for a time at least, to the witness of Christ in secular vocations, not only because their own personal spiritual resources are weak, but also because no genuine effort has been made to develop corporate resources which might sustain them in their vocations.

It is at least arguable that the failure to develop more fully the concept of Christian vocation in fields of this kind explains the feeble and superficial impact which the Christian forces have in modern political and economic affairs.

In any case there are unnumbered young Christians today who take seriously the problem of applying in their own lives this idea of Christian vocation. It is important, or so it seems to me, for such young men and women to share with one another and with the older generation of Christians their speculations, experiences, and failures as they seek individually to prepare for and fulfil their ministry.

My suspicion, and my hope, is that from such a process of interchange, meditation, discussion and prayer new insights, untried techniques, untapped resources for the Christian lay person in a secular field may be discovered or developed. At the very least the vocation of each should be strengthened by

the visible assurance that he or she is not alone, but is supported in his or her ministry by others of the same inclination.

One word as an aside : my feeling that we must search for resources in terms of specific vocational situations does not mean that I overlook the importance of the local congregation as a resource. Indeed I tend towards the position that each local congregation is the permanent frontier upon which we must work in the development of our understanding of the concept of Christian vocation. But this will require the transformation of many of our local congregations from cordial human fellowships centered around a weekly sermon to worshipping communities of believers who acknowledge Christ as Lord. The discovery of resources to strengthen the Christian vocation of lay people apart from the local congregation itself, would, I feel, contribute toward such a transformation.

I cannot speak for anyone but myself in this, although I do suspect that other students share with me a certain sense of frustration and bewilderment that so little has yet been done through the S.C.M. or elsewhere on a significant scale to concretely apply the concept of Christian vocation in secular fields and, indeed, to test its validity.

I know that in one sense the test of its validity for me or for you lies in the very quality and integrity of our own personal Christian experience. Yet surely the S.C.M. and the total Christian community should do more than proclaim the concept of Christian vocation. Surely there is occasion for us to seek to understand it, to apply it, to experiment with its relevance to the secular callings together, now, and in terms of our own situations whatever they may be.

WILLIAM STRINGFELLOW.

* * *

To secular society the question of what job a young student should choose has become a matter of great concern. The approach to the problem is made from two distinctly different angles. The planners of society work out in detail how many engineers, doctors, lawyers, etc. will be needed for a given period

of time. At the same time guidance is given to young people according to more and more perfected methods of testing their aptitudes for various areas of work. In a society like the Swedish one, where elements of socialist and liberal ideologies are mixed rather freely, the planners and the vocational counsellors still seem to hope that by some chance or providential guidance the result will come out even in the end, that is, that there will be as many potential engineers detected by the counsellors as the planners have need for.

In this situation, there seems to be less and less provision for a choice and a decision by the individual himself. During his final school year he is presented by those in authority with the definite results of tests made during his school career as well as with the needs of society. He needs a very strong character indeed (a side of the personality seldom taken into account in the tests) to march against the tide.

The great Swedish thinker, Geijer, at the beginning of the nineteenth century encouraged everyone to follow his genius, and asserted that for every man there is something that he can do better than anyone else. A bold assertion, still bolder in this day of mass labour than at a time when romantic individualism was more possible than today! Yet to me this is the clearest expression of a faith in the Christian vocation. He based his claim on his faith in God's plan for every human being. No one has entered this world but by His will and for His purpose. To find out this purpose is to ask for one's vocation as a Christian.

The means of discovering God's calling are not necessarily contradictory to those advised by modern society. God may use both statistics and aptitude tests to show the way He means us to go. I also think that He speaks more often through boards, agencies and officials than through visions and revelations. But I do not think that a Christian can be sure to find his vocation at the crossing-point between the advice of the vocational guide and the figures of the national planner of jobs. He has to consider the needs of his church. He must take into account that in meeting his God in individual and corporate prayer and in Bible study he may become aware of ways and values that are not reckoned with by secular agencies but that have direct bearing on his future.

And now two more specific comments :

1. *Professional or lay Christian service.* The Church today has a great need for Christian lay experts in every field of modern life. At the same time there is a strong demand for well-trained ministers and other professional Christian workers. Protestant churches have a strong tradition of placing equal value on both kinds of tasks. But for the individual Christian the dilemma may become very acute. And so it should. No one should choose a vocation without seriously considering the possibility of professional Christian service. The main question should be : Where, in the service of the Church, could my life be of the greatest use ? Here the Student Christian Movements have a special task, and perhaps even more their school branches. Some twenty years ago, the intense work within the Swedish S.C.M. of an ardent and gifted Schools' Secretary, now a young Bishop, gave to our church many strikingly capable and devoted young ministers. His successors have sometimes had to stress the opposite side : that the Church is served also by Christian laymen.

2. *The double vocation of women.* If the question of Christian vocation is a difficult one for many Christian students today, it is especially complicated for women students. They always see the future in a double perspective and find difficulty in looking forward whole-heartedly to either : they have to choose a profession and yet the vast majority will be given another vocation as mothers and wives. Our society cannot afford to lose them in either capacity. As students they will do well to hold themselves ready for both, *ad utrumque paratae*. Some may by then be aware — as are some of their male fellow students — that celibacy is to be their way. Others — and undoubtedly a larger number — will remain in celibacy not from their own choice. Yet, in both cases, as the report to the General Committee on the task of the S.C.M. in the student milieu points out, "celibacy must be considered in the light of a vocation which is given by God to man or woman".

It seems to me, however, that this report fails to define the positive character of the over-all relationship between men and women. This is a question not just of marriage and celibacy, as pointed out by W. A. Visser 't Hooft in *The Student World* several years ago. The biblical message means that God wants

man to live his life in relationship to woman and woman her life in relationship to man. Human life is human only in this mutuality, this relationship, this double-sidedness. And we may add, the creative working together of man and woman, the unique stimulating and inspiring effect that is the mark of this relationship is still a source of renewal that is most incompletely utilised. Christians have not provided a guide for the world in this respect as they might have been expected to do. The S.C.M.s are ahead of the Church, yet within their ranks there is also much to be done.

In this direction also lies the solution of the dilemma of the married woman student. She will still feel torn between her profession and her home. Her situation in most countries is hard, for staying at home means giving most of her time to a kind of manual work for which she has never prepared. The main point, however, is not the solution of this practical problem. The essential thing is that in their marriage she and her husband can realise something of the mutuality of soul and body which God intended when He created them for one another. It will demand of her husband that he sees his marriage as part of his Christian vocation, and this will be still more important to them both when they become parents. It seems to me more and more that to be parents is the most important part of the Christian vocation that God gives to some of us.

BIRGIT RODHE.

* * *

I have been out in the district with Pastor Eastman studying the possibilities of a relief program for S.C.M. members during summer vacation. It is indeed true that today "Burma is a vast refugee camp". Many villages have been burned down, and disease and misery are rampant among the displaced people.

On our trip Pastor Eastman and I discussed a number of things — the Christian youth question, mission policy, politics, and certain specific student problems that we face in Burma today. In the course of these talks he told me that he had just completed a series of three one-hour studies on "Christian vocation" with the S.C.M. members of Rangoon University. The

impressions that he obtained from these were not very encouraging. I have before me now written answers from a group of students who were asked to say why they had chosen one course of study rather than another. Speaking of the answers, Pastor Eastman quoted Reinhold Niebuhr: "It is not merely that the way is littered with obstacles ; it is rather that the road is blocked and *no one knows whether it leads anywhere.*" Of course it was disappointing that the reading of the students' answers to questions about Christian vocation should remind one of the import of that statement ! But as I have gone through their answers I have realised that, for some, Mr. Eastman's conclusion was correct. To quote exactly one of the most discouraging answers : "I take this combination (of subjects) just because my cousin is taking this combination too. Now I find that this combination is hard for me to follow. I have now changed my mind and I want to change my course."

The sense of vocation is absent, and this is unfortunately true of almost the whole student population in the colleges of Burma. Vernacular "education" doesn't carry students very far, and so they come to the university just to acquire a degree. Without such a degree almost all doors are closed. So another student writes : "My reason in taking science was primarily to become a doctor. Later on I came to hate the subjects I was taking — lost my interest in the prospect somehow — and now I just stick on to the Bachelor of Science course hoping against hope that I will graduate soon. As I come to think of it now, I have no particular reason for taking the B. Sc. course except that I want to get a degree — and soon !"

On the other hand on going through the answers one also finds that there are some who feel that they have a mission to fulfil — a task to carry out. Some, after equipping themselves, want to go back to work for the development of their people, and some wish to combine Christian ideals with their healing art.

But I feel that in Burma there are very few who have a definite sense of vocation (not to say of *Christian* vocation) when they come to college. For most students their life-work is decided after graduation. They say that their sense of Christian vocation comes gradually, as they find themselves in a certain profession.

This may sound a bit peculiar to people in other countries, but I have a feeling that it is largely due to the problems which now confront students when choosing a profession. Many come to college just to get the degree without which they cannot find desirable jobs. Since the war we have had a general effort by the students to pass examinations as quickly as possible — war was the excuse. Thus it is not a question of choosing a job for which a student is best fitted, but of finding a source of income to maintain himself or the family which had so far looked after him.

We thus turn out every year a mass of literate young men and women, trained mostly for clerical employment, who have no sense of vocation. The reason goes back, I think, to the days of the British regime, when a regular flow of graduates was needed to staff the bureaucracy. Agricultural and commercial conditions in our country limit the types of employment available. Agriculture is backward and the commercial field is more or less the monopoly of foreign dwellers in the land. Difficulty in finding satisfactory employment produces a feeling of depression and an inferiority complex which often result, among other things, in the rise of unfair means of obtaining employment.

As to what the S.C.M. could do and what it is doing with regard to the concept of vocation, I feel that, in contrast to the non-Christians, the Christian students are year by year being confronted in the S.C.M. with this idea of Christian vocation — in discussions, in sermons from the pulpit and in study circles : the S.C.M. at Rangoon University has just completed a series of studies on the theme of vocation.

In the absence of a Christian college, it will now be the special duty of the Burma S.C.M. in the "secular" university to study the general post-war situation, and constantly to present the need for a sense of Christian vocation to its members. It will have to be shown that Christian vocation "does not mean a fatalistic acceptance of the existing conditions but that it does mean that we are called to choose between bored resignation, active bitterness or despair, and a life of surrender, of joyful acceptance and obedience in doing the will of God wherever we are placed". The unsatisfactory and disappointing conditions of society due to the war and its aftermath can be the source of

an impelling challenge — a challenge to consecrate our lives here and now, to lift the Cross of Christ high, that in our own and every land all may have a share in the love and joy of the Kingdom which are ours.

I would like to close with a quote from the September 1946 Quarterly Bulletin of the Central Youth Council of the N.C.C. of India, Burma and Ceylon :

“It comes to pass therefore that there are two great classes of people in the world of Christians today : first, those who have God’s will in their *character* ; second, those who have God’s will likewise in their *career*. The first are in the world to live : they have a *life*. The second are in the world to minister : they have a *mission*... It requires a well-kept life to know the will of God and none but the Christ-like in character can know the Christ-like in career.”

KYAW THAN.

* * *

When a man, and especially a young man, is confronted with the question, “What are we living for?”, I think that unconsciously he is being confronted with what we call Christian vocation.

Everyone who is not satisfied with the routine of his life is feeling already that he has a special “vocation” in this life which in one way or another must be fulfilled. And if we feel that we and our lives are points in eternity and that this eternity consists of these points, we must do our best to understand our place in God’s eternal plan in order to discover ways leading towards the goal which God has set for our lives.

“Christian vocation”, therefore, is nothing more than God’s calling — through special events of life, persons, etc. — which must be heard by everyone who wants to live a really successful and creative life.

To keep our hearts open to hear the divine calling is the basic presupposition for a really devoted life, and if there is the will to do what God wants us to do, then in every profession we can do our daily work, sure that we are living according to the divine will.

A carpenter, with a strong feeling of love translated into act, by working in his shop is following much more his "Christian vocation" than a priest or a theologian who in spite of the D. D. which he has in his pocket has nothing but an empty heart.

Choosing a profession is, of course, a difficult matter for a man who wants to spend his life according to the divine calling to a devoted life. But it has been well illustrated that such a life can be led by anyone — the lawyer, the clerk — as we do not so much need to Christianise those confessing Christianity as to influence with Christianity those we call "secular". And I dare say there is no better way of doing this for men of various professions than through fellow men of the same profession.

It goes without saying that if our profession is related directly to our Christian vocation, it results not only in special satisfaction but at the same time in very special responsibilities.

If we feel a strong desire to give our full lives to direct Christian work, such as missionary work as pastors or scientific work from a Christian point of view, then we must first of all determine whether we have a divine calling to such a special Christian vocation, and then go ahead realising that what we have undertaken is not easy.

From personal experience I know that everyone who is known to be living a devoted life according to a special vocation serves as an example to others. And it depends on whether this example proves good or bad for getting results really worthy of the divine calling.

DENIS SAVRAMIS.

De Ecclesia

INTERCOMMUNION

AN INTER-"CATHOLIC" DISCUSSION

We are printing below extracts from a correspondence that took place between two of the contributors to the last issue of The Student World, "The Sacrament of Unity". Father Florovsky and Bill Nicholls are clearly in broad agreement on the main issues, in

spite of their membership of different churches, the Orthodox and the Anglican respectively. Bill Nicholls, as a member of the Federation Staff, drew Father Florovsky's attention to certain aspects of the discussions of the problem of intercommunion at the General Committee, which he felt needed a more explicit treatment than they had been given in the latter's article in The Student World. Father Florovsky replied, restating and amplifying the position taken in his article in the light of the considerations brought forward by Bill Nicholls. The discussion ranges round the ideas of the "given unity" of the Church, and the Holy Communion as a "fore-taste of unity", which dominated the discussions on this problem at Whitby.

My first impression on reading your article was that I agreed with every word of it, with the exception of course of those points where you are speaking specifically as an Orthodox. On second thoughts, I was forced to the conclusion that you did not really meet the other point of view in its strongest form, and that while you might have answered the supporters of open communion in the Federation at large, you had not really spoken to the most acute minds with whom I have discussed the question at the meeting of the General Committee and of the Ecumenical Commission of that Committee. It seems to me that in your description of the point of view which you call the "common denominator theory" you have lumped together the relatively superficial or "liberal" point of view, which it is quite easy to refute, and the much profounder view which I cannot help to some extent sharing, even though I reach the same final conclusions as you do, and which, as it seems to me, presents a challenge to the "Catholic" point of view which it is our duty to face and answer. It is, I agree, very difficult to describe this view without falling into a more superficial form which we would both condemn, but I think it is worthwhile making the attempt. I do so with more confidence because I feel fairly sure that you must have had the experience I am describing.

We found at our General Committee that we had to admit that however great our differences on the human level, and they were indeed very great, coming as we did not only from almost every confession but also from almost every nationality

and political background, nevertheless we were aware of a unity in Christ at the deepest level. This unity, as it seemed to us, was something which was given to us, something which we did not ourselves create, but as it might be said, something which we had done all we could to spoil. We were aware of the dangers of mistaking a merely human or sentimental feeling of fellowship for the *koinonia* of the Holy Catholic Church, and it is quite true that we may have fallen into this temptation. But in all humility, I must say that I do not think we did. I do not think we did because it was only when we had really brought out our deep differences into the light of day and faced them seriously, that we slowly became aware of the existence of this given unity which made it possible for us to talk frankly and in charity, in spite of our very deep divisions. We all felt compelled to recognise the gift of unity in the spirit to which we could only bear witness with thankfulness.

Now it is from this point that the exponents of open communion in the Federation at present start to build their argument. They say that in fact we all recognise one another as being in Christ, that especially high churchmen must realise that such a recognition must also carry with it the recognition that those from whom we are divided must also be in some sense churchmen. But in any case it remains scandalous in the highest degree that those who recognise one another as being in Christ should have to separate at the Lord's Table. Now it is true that many of us thought that we ought to continue to bear this pain and scandal, indeed as you so finely say, that the bearing of this cross may be creative. But I wonder if in your article, although you have described the situation as "antinomical", you have seen as clearly as we did how antinomical it really is. We felt that this experience of a given unity had theological implications, both for the nature of the Church and for the understanding or "diagnosis" of our divisions, although we did not know what those theological implications were. One way of putting it seemed to be this: that the unity of Christian people is something which is given in the redemptive acts of Christ and is prior to our human agreement in the faith, although it is certainly the will of Christ that we should agree. I would say myself that the visible Church is intended to be the manifestation in history of this deep unity

in Christ of the whole human race, which will only become visible in its fullness at the second coming of the Lord. Now this view, which I share with many of my "Protestant" friends, is used by them as an argument in favour of open communion. They say that any unity which we can enjoy on earth now is a foretaste of the eschatological unity of the marriage supper of the Lamb in the Kingdom. They believe that the purpose of the Eucharist is to provide such a foretaste, and that therefore all communions should be open.

I do not find this argument convincing, but I nevertheless believe that it is the strongest argument that I have met against our whole position of closed communions, and I do not think that in your article you have answered it. On the other hand, since among the leaders of the Federation this is likely to remain the common background of our future discussions on questions relating to communion services and intercommunion, I feel this is a point to which "Catholics" will have to give a great deal more attention than they have already, if our arguments are to be directed towards the real issues.

It seems to me quite possible that even if you accept, as I do, the existence of this given unity, you may give a different interpretation to it as an Orthodox from that which I give to it as an Anglican. It is surely not possible for an Anglican to regard his church as the *una sancta* quite in the same simple way as an Orthodox must. I do not find the branch theory of the Church a very convincing one in the light of the ecumenical movement. It seems to me to be a form of self-justification over against Rome and Orthodoxy which is no longer permissible to those who recognise the sinfulness of our divisions. Therefore I am bound to regard myself as to some degree in schism. Perhaps it is impossible for an Orthodox to follow me at this point.

I am led to the conclusion that perhaps the meaning of our divisions is this: that the Church in God's design is both His total redemptive act in history and also a visible historical society with a divinely given structure resting on the first coming of the Lord, and that the effect of our divisions is that these two aspects of the Church have become partially separated, perhaps not to be fully rejoined until the second coming. It seems to me that our ecumenical endeavour to receive again the unity which God

continually wills to give us is in the true sense eschatological, not merely because it is humanly speaking impossible to foresee its success short of the Kingdom, but also because our efforts to do God's will in this way may be used by Him to shorten the time before He will give us the Kingdom. But if this is so, we must surely regard any achieved catholicity as once again a foretaste of the eschatological fullness of catholicity in the Kingdom. Therefore, once again it is much less easy to refute the arguments of our brethren who press for open communion. I must confess myself perplexed.

WILLIAM NICHOLLS.

* * *

Have you ever come across my article on "The Limits of the Church" in the *Church Quarterly Review* for 1933? I am following St. Augustine and suggest a distinction between *canonical* and *charismatic* (or *mystical*) borders of the Church. At that time I had to face primarily the over-rigouristic tendency in our own Church and to fight against a widely spread (especially among the Greeks) contention that all "non-Orthodox" were no Christians at all and were to be treated precisely "as heathen men". But the truth is double-edged. "Canonical" criterium is not an ultimate criterium, and the wild field does not begin immediately across the canonical border. There is an enigmatic "intermediary state". Yet we are not entitled to disregard this "canonical fence", because, strictly speaking, it is much more than merely a legal and disciplinary barrier. A schism is always a failure and leads inevitably to disintegration. As everything in the Church, unity is at once both given and required, has been given and is to be achieved. Schisms are failures of men to respond to the divine call to unity. Yet the given unity never disappears. After all, we all are united in and by the redeeming love and purpose of God. And that unity we discover in spite of all our disagreements, when we dig deep enough. Antinomy is created and constituted precisely by this enigmatic "disproportion" between the Church and Christendom (the phrase is of Fr. Congar), or else between the "institutional" and "charismatic" aspects of the Church herself, or again between her

“historic” and “eschatological” dimensions. There is an antinomy (and not just an un-dialectical duality) because (Church) history itself is “an inaugurated eschatology”. We must be very careful not to smooth this basic antinomy into a confusion. There is (and there should be) a *tension*. This is the very meaning of the “Cross of patience”. I guess we do agree at this point. My point is then this. This tension is a healthy reminder of our failure to achieve an agreement in truth. In a doctrinal controversy and confusion, all cannot be equally right. But we are expected to find the true way. Of course, the full truth will be revealed only in another “aeon” still to come.

Yet have we achieved already the measure of truth available or accessible within historical limits? My reply is — no. We are hopelessly *behind our own measure*. We have not fulfilled our task. Would it help a bit if we rush and jump impatiently into the “new aeon”, which has not yet come historically, even if it is, in a sense, “at hand” and “among us”, since the coming of the Lord and fulfilment of all prophecy? In any case, we have not fulfilled our task, although God did accomplish His purpose. Briefly speaking, I mean it would be an unhealthy and irresponsible rush, a license and a violence (both spiritual or mystical), if we forced a “common table” before we have done all we had to do and, in a sense, were up to do. For me, an open communion is unlawful and illegitimate not in a canonical sense, as a break of discipline and disregard of confusion, but primarily in a spiritual or mystical sense, since, in my opinion, it implies a sort of self-righteousness and self-satisfaction, as if we had really done everything in our power to overcome and overrule “our unhappy divisions”. We have not, I am afraid. Therefore it would be a sort of unhealthy “enthusiasm” or *Schwaermerei*, if we dared to join at the Altar. We must not call in “eschatology” out of season, before we “have borne the burden and heat of the day”. We must rather bless God that He has given us this foretaste of unity which we had not deserved a bit. The heavenly vision may become for us a somnolent “quietive”, while we need, on the contrary, a powerful incentive. Let us taste the sour fruit of our disloyalty up to the verge of despair and then repent.

I had personally to face and experience this antinomy years ago, and in its uttermost sharpness. Years ago, in the Fellowship

of St. Alban and St. Sergius, a proposal was made to try a sort of anticipated and partial intercommunion between the members of the brotherhood, who had already realised their utter unity and agreement in doctrine, piety, charity, etc. "The validity of Anglican orders" was taken for granted, since it has become spiritually evident. It was also suggested that some sort of a canonical authorisation might have been secured on both sides and an additional rite of mutual re-valorisation might have been administered. I have to confess that from the outset I was definitely against the scheme, and possibly it was my intervention that made the attempt impossible. I have to add that I had Fr. Hebert with me the whole time, as well as Michael Ramsey. I had no doubts, but I had an open wound in my heart. Possibly I have suffered more than any of the schemers, who were guided rather by their glorious dreams. For years I used to attend the communion service in Anglican churches and to preach at them. Anglican forms and habits of worship were already mine own. The highest measure of Christian "fraternisation", available and permissible in the state of division, had been already achieved. An eschatological vision was granted to me. It was really an unbearable burden and a saddening pain for me to abstain and to take others away. It was a true cross, and it was given to me to glory in it. My main argument was that only a "catholic action" is permissible in the Holy Catholic Church, that nothing partial and "exceptional" can ever lead to a true integration. Or, in other words, we have to seek not the satisfaction of our dreams and hopes, as glorious and inspiring as they may be or seem to be, but solely the common revival of spiritual life in existing communities. The unity can only grow out of a "molecular action", which is to be then integrated. An occasional intercommunion, or that by a special dispensation, will ultimately hinder the work of reunion. The immediate task is the recovery of common mind and sound theology.

GEORGE FLOROVSKY.

A NORTH AMERICAN TRAVEL DIARY

by MARIE-JEANNE DE HALLER

Midnight, and a dense and nervous crowd trying to pass with all possible speed from the customs offices to the embarkation quay at Cherbourg. In the general rush a suitcase seems on the point of falling into the sea. Travellers of all kinds, elegantly dressed or refugee, seem to be in the grip of the same fever; and so they remain until, two hours later, with the help of the skilful, courteous crew of the Queen Elizabeth they find their luggage and cabins at last.

I could not help wondering what thoughts thronged into the minds of all these travellers. There was that poor Bohemian peasant woman in her black headdress, crouching in a corner on her precious bundle — would she be only terrified if I helped her to find a sheltered nook from the wind that blew in gusts over the deck of our tender? And there was a man shouting and gesticulating at his porter — I wondered if he was venting the accumulated bitterness of a long and painful exodus. I felt myself surrounded by a great flood of hopes and anxieties on board that brightly-lit liner.

New York at last! But no time in that noisy, bustling city to take my bearings, for my welcoming friends and all their committees left me not a minute to realise where I was. I found the Executive of U.S.C.C. wrestling with the ecumenical problem and studying it with the most serious attention. They kept asking themselves whether our organisations with their divisions are not a denial of our deep-lying unity in Jesus Christ, and whether because of that unity we are not called to revise our present position. "Something is really happening", said John Deschner, as we got into the little suburban train which took us to his home. And it was true; something did happen at that May Executive Committee. At the time I could not grasp the significance of the really exceptional resolution

which they voted unanimously : "Believing that it is God's will, it is the conviction of this group that we should be one in work as well as in spirit, willing to accept the pattern to which God leads us." It was a good deal later, once I had become familiar with the complexity of the American situation and with the mechanism of the different organisations, that I understood the feelings of the General Secretary of U.S.C.C. It is quite true that the leaders of the American Movements had a vision there which may have serious consequences. Nothing made me realise more sharply the paradox in which these numerically vast Movements are living than the eagerness with which the different conferences of the summer discussed and studied the May resolution. How is it possible for a national secretary really to know his Movement and to represent it faithfully, except through a closely linked chain of committees ? And how can he, loaded as he is with all this paraphernalia, still retain the necessary suppleness to respond to unforeseen situations or the promptings of the Spirit ?

What, then, is our responsibility to God ? Are we to be the faithful representatives of a constituency or people who, while remaining open to impressions, can yet make responsible decisions and act in accordance with the guiding of Christian obedience ? How is a leader to find the narrow path between arbitrary individualism and hence tyranny, and personal responsibility to God for a community ? Is it just possible that the sacrosanct democratic procedure of these Movements may sometimes impede the action of God instead of being its instrument ? This is a question to which I for one would not hazard an answer !

But I was not facing problems of such scope all the time ! I left New York six days after my arrival, and I was sorry to have to tear myself away from all the friends who had gathered together to listen to a speech from Dr. Visser 't Hooft on the W.S.C.F. and the World Council of Churches.

A telegram from the Canadian Movement urged me to come to their National Committee, so north I went on one of those marvellous American trains. The temperature was rising, and so was the humidity, but nothing could have spoiled the atmosphere and the spirit of our Committee. To my great surprise I found that the four so-called Commissions of the W.S.C.F. (Political, University, Ecumenical and Evangelism) had taken a central place in the

program of groups right into the Far West. This Committee delighted me. It was composed essentially of students and students of the best type. I was greatly struck both by the intellectual and spiritual level of the discussions and by the general desire to understand and hand on the faith.

"Niagara Falls" — are we really near the Niagara Falls? Off went the train again, pitilessly, while I realised that through pure stupidity I had omitted to look at the map and to stop here for a few hours, but I was somewhat consoled by passing through miles and miles of peach trees in bloom. What would Syracuse be like? Just a modern university town like many others with no resemblance to the Sicilian capital... and yet adorned with magnificent trees and set among delightful green suburbs. Here I found a student population of eight thousand, most of them living in little tin barracks, which strangely recalled the temporary dwellings of bombed cities in Europe. It was examination time and students of both sexes were streaming through the streets in their blue jeans with their vivid, many-coloured shirts flapping in the wind. Here and there were anxious faces bending over notebooks. Student life is different over there, but I felt that we in Europe have much to learn from the simplicity and resourcefulness of our trans-Atlantic friends. Studies may be less intense and profound than in Europe, but I was greatly impressed to find that students did not think it below their dignity to serve in restaurants or do other forms of manual work to pay their college expenses. Hendrick's Chapel is the centre of the religious life of the University of Syracuse. Student chaplains of all confessions (including a rabbi) meet every week to discuss their different activities and particularly aid to sick or distressed students. It was my first meeting with one of these Inter-Faith Councils, whose task is to satisfy the administration of the university about religious education as a whole. It certainly seemed to create serious problems, for it is not easy for such a staff to face frankly the subject of student evangelisation. However it was possible to discuss freely efforts made to draw students into varied activities and the necessity and methods for training leadership. But it was clear that underlying aims and motives could not always be shared, so that in spite of close bonds of friendship with his fellows, each student chaplain was left to struggle alone with the really deep problems of his task.

And here I wonder if, with all its frank and spontaneous cordiality, this is not a country where the human spirit is left desperately alone with its own deep problems? What do these houses with their perpetually open doors symbolise? Certainly an amazing openness of heart and spirit, and a race of people who meet life and their fellows with a friendly and confident air. But behind all the sociability and charming gaiety I caught glimpses now and again of a real depth of loneliness.

Back again to Fifth Avenue with the yellow cabs darting through the traffic at nightmare speed! I rejoiced to leave the next day for country regions where my mountain foot could tread with more assurance! The wooded hills of Pennsylvania and the strongly Scandinavian countryside of Maine with its lakes and forests provided an ideal setting for student conferences. Here in barracks and bungalows gathered a merry throng of undergraduates. These two conferences of the Middle Atlantic and New England S.C.M.s were a great joy to me. My only responsibility was to direct Bible study and certain discussion groups — and of course above all to get to know the students. Perhaps I was most struck by their frankness and their spirit of honest inquiry. They did not, to be sure, soar to any great philosophic or theological heights. Many of them seemed to be facing life with a sense of adequacy to all situations and with no other choice to make than that between good and evil. The idea that perhaps they might be faced by a choice between evil and lesser evil disturbed and disappointed them, but frequently I felt that their optimism was merely on the surface and that they were marvellously open to the Gospel whenever it reached out to them with its human realism and its divine absoluteness. The American student is honest enough to say what he believes and what he does not believe without indulging in mere words. It is true that his creed is sometimes confined to : God (very indefinite), man created in His image (although at the same time he has not the faintest idea what to do with the first chapters of Genesis), American democracy (accepted but not understood), and "student initiative". But he has a feeling that this is not sufficient and he is really hungry for a fully conscious Christian faith. This is also related to the theological renewal among the leaders which impressed me greatly wherever I went. However I hope this renewal is not going to be merely a sort of appendage to European thought. If it is to be a

real leaven which will endure, it must be thought out and lived out in American terms; and it is just in this way that the S.C.M.s of the United States can make an invaluable contribution to the other Movements of the W.C.S.F. It was a delight to me to hear the essential elements of the Christian faith discussed in fresh new terms so different from that theological jargon which we in Europe find it so difficult to get rid of. Little groups under the pines at "O-At-Ka" discussed the situation of students in Asia and in Eastern Europe. How were they to understand their fellow students and help them? The American student does not see all problems in relation to himself; he is interested in others for themselves. I wonder if that is as true among students of Europe?

Over the blue waters of the lake appeared a red point which approached at surprising speed, and suddenly a poppy-coloured taxi plane stopped almost in the midst of the merry crowd of bathers. Two students who had hitchhiked for hundreds of miles had suddenly leaped on an aeroplane to arrive in time for the conference. What a typical symbol of American life! I only began to realise the distances after I had motored for hours just as easily as we would motor sixty kilometers in Europe. These great motor roads of Virginia — with their borders of mimosa whose balls are ten times as large as ours and coloured rose, orange or red — these great fields of grain further north which sweep to the horizon, with every fifty or a hundred kilometers a solitary farm with its silo and two or three trees, and then again immense distances steeped in sunlight! I no longer marvelled that the whole scale of values was different in such a country as that, and that Americans always seemed to be speaking about "the biggest" or "the fastest", etc. Such terms are necessary in regions where the sowing is done by aeroplane. I travelled great distances from North Carolina with its luxuriant southern vegetation to the prairies of Minnesota and North Dakota, and on to the arid stretches of the Rocky Mountains inhabited by Walt Disney animals.

"And what do you think about America and the Americans?" Everywhere I was asked that question which it is so impossible to answer. What could I think of a world that was so infinitely diverse? Of course there is that America which is exported, if I dare express myself thus — the standard America of sky-scrapers and Woolworth, the press and Broadway; but that is not where we find the soul

of America, which belongs rather to these widely different regions with their populations which vary greatly in outlook and accent. America is to be found in those little girls with their blond pig-tails — second or third generation Americans — in the Norwegian colonies, in the conflict between two races which is seen in the faces of so many coloured people. It is to be found in the families of New England and the great cities; in the churches with their countless sects, from the narrowest fundamentalists on the one hand to the vaguest unitarians on the other. It is to be found in these hearts of boundless generosity, and in power-politics. Indeed America is a world which is both unbelievably and indescribably attractive.

I found it very hard in September to climb the gangway of the liner which was to bear me far from this welcoming land. I had witnessed remarkable life and renewal among the Movements of the Federation. I had learned to appreciate the crushing task of their leaders as they try to respond to the demands of such a current of life and such expectancy. "Our enduring common task is effective evangelisation. We desire to bring students faith in Christ, and to lead them to a fuller life in the Church and thereby to responsible action in the world. We believe that under God's guidance we can bear our witness more effectively together than separately. We urge intensive study of our common evangelistic task for the years ahead, and the undertaking of a specific program of evangelisation in the name of all our Movements." Over there too, as with us, life would have no meaning without Christian hope.

A CENTRAL AMERICAN TRAVEL DIARY

by KEITH BRIDSTON

Less than a week ago I had been in Los Angeles taking part in a regional U.S.C.C. meeting. Now after 2,000 miles by car and another 2,500 by plane I had reached Miami, via New York, on the other side of the continent. The sun was just rising as we walked across the runway to our Pan-American "Clipper", but the night had not tempered the heavy, warm air which seemed to cling to one like a damp garment. There was no doubt that we were on the edge of the tropics. Once aloft the clouds began to break beneath us; we caught glimpses of the shades of purple and blue of the shallow seas below and finally the pinks, whites, tans and forest greens as the waves crashed over the coral reefs and beaches to meet the jungle swamps of Cuba.

Over the graceful palms and the checkerboard geometry of the cane fields and finally the rugged mountains of Jamaica we went, until at last, at Kingston bay, we dropped down for the landing. The official inspections did not take long, though they were complicated by the interruptions of a local newspaper reporter who wanted to know "in a sentence or two" what the W.S.C.F. was and what was the purpose of my visit!

At last, Roy Francis, the Jamaican representative at the General Committee, disentangled me and introduced Edwin Taylor, the S.C.M. president, Edgar Hallett, long-time Y.M.C.A. secretary in Kingston, and Miss Irwin of the Jamaican Welfare Society. It seemed strange to hear British accents and to be driving on the "wrong" side of the street again, but when my hosts, the Poxons at Caenwood College, the Methodist theological seminary, offered me afternoon tea, it was definitely like being transplanted back across the Atlantic.

The same day my work began with a meeting at a technical school, in which the students took complete charge of the program, concluding with a very proper and well-memorised British vote of

thanks for a Federation visit. Dinner, then, with Wally Foster and his wife, who have been so faithful in supporting the Jamaican S.C.M. in its time without a paid secretary, and the evening closed with a talk over the local radio station, Z.Q.I.

It had been a long day, but it had been a good introduction to the time ahead. In less than two weeks I spoke at a good share of the schools on the island, took part in the Y.M.C.A.'s world week of prayer observances, preached in several of Kingston's churches, met with a great many S.C.M. senior friends — many of them old members and staff secretaries of the British S.C.M., and even gave an hour's lecture on Luther's theology to a group of Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican theological students. But I was everywhere received so hospitably and warmly that even a heavy schedule did not dim my enthusiasm for Jamaica or modify my regret at having to leave so soon.

It had been a moving experience for me. On the long flight from Kingston, over Haiti and Santa Domingo to San Juan, Puerto Rico, I thought a great deal about what I had seen and heard. I remembered a rudely-lettered sign along the road, "Give the Lord praise today". Little we had seen would have stimulated one in that direction, for we had been passing the completely wretched cardboard-and-tin slums of Kingston — "homes" which were hardly more than holes in the ground. It would be more shocking, I suppose, if our imaginations and consciences were not so dulled and calloused. But what can one make of this kind of misery, disease and poverty which robs men of their manhood, much less their theology!

There are factors, of course, which are less subject to human persuasion than others, for instance, the disease which has reduced Jamaica's main crop, bananas, from sixty million stems a year to eight million. But even in this case, many feel that it was brought about by ruthless economic interests exploiting the land and leaving it weak, denuded and eroded. Certainly it is true that a large share of the difficulties which plague Jamaica are man-made, and it will take a tremendous amount of consecrated effort to make the island what it ought to be.

Fortunately, there are efforts under way to alleviate the distress and build up the life of the people. Institutions like the Jamaica Welfare Society, and schools like the Holmwood Technical Training Centre and the various teachers' training colleges, are really doing

a remarkable work in developing native crafts and arts, in teaching rural people how to better their agricultural and domestic techniques, and in teaching others to be teachers in all fields. It is disturbing to visit in an outlying district a small village school, with inadequate equipment, and with so few teachers that one finds the circles of students (standing outside for lack of room) under the great cotton trees being taught by fellow students. And yet it is wonderful, because, in spite of all the handicaps, something is being done and steps are being taken to solve the problems.

In all of this painfully slow work of redeeming Jamaican life from poverty, ignorance and distress, one must be grateful for the pioneering of devoted Christians. There is no question that the Christian community has been the salt of the earth as far as Jamaica is concerned; a week's visit to the island would refute much of the missionary scepticism which is often present among Christian students of America and Europe. The Church bears the one fundamental hope for Jamaica, quite practically, in producing men and women of moral and spiritual sensitivity, integrity, and with a sense of real vocation; only such leaven will basically change their life and society. And further, the S.C.M. is one of the shining hopes of the Church, for it has, as elsewhere, developed intelligent leadership for the churches and, perhaps most important of all, made the churches feel part of one Church.

The great Christian task which lies ahead may be in the field of politics. The redemption of Jamaican life will come in part through the establishment of basic standards of economic and social justice. Here the Church is being called to wider responsibilities than it is yet conscious of. The Gospel is thought of in primarily personal terms, and it is evident in politics only to the extent of being a political catchword. I saw some of the political rallies for the national election (the general franchise was first given at the last one), and an integral part of them was a recital of the Lord's Prayer or Apostles' Creed, some revival hymns in rather jazz style, and an avowal of "Christian principles" by all sides. The real difficulty lies in the fact that the people, and particularly the Christians, are not really conscious of the deeper responsibility which the — perhaps premature — enfranchisement involves. Much the same thing could be said for the new "West Indian University" in Kingston, which as yet has not been taken very seriously by the

general public, and by the churches only insofar as their young people attend it.

One might well be overwhelmed by the immensity of the task lying ahead, but one night a missionary told me something of the Christian history of the island — of Baxter and Coke and “all the saints”. Here were men who came, not as some of the so-called British “refugees” of today, escaping a high income tax, but with courage, vision, and filled with the strength of the Holy Spirit. One wishes the Church could recover that careless evangelical passion which brought Coke to the West Indies twelve or thirteen times in the days of sailing ships, and finally earned him a watery grave in the Indian Ocean on his way to conquer new worlds in Asia. These basic, elementary, Christian virtues are needed in Jamaica today. On my last Sunday in Kingston I took part in the monthly city-wide Christian men’s meeting. As I looked out over the five hundred odd faces and we sang that Christ’s Incarnation “hallows all our human race”, I wondered how they could be Christian enough to take that verse seriously in terms of one of a race from whom they have suffered so much humiliation for so long. More deeply than ever before I knew the simple Christian affirmations and beliefs which are involved in race relations. So it is, probably, with most of Jamaica’s problems, but how to make simple Christian obedience into a ruling passion ?

* * *

Rev. Limardo, counsellor of the Evangelical student association, and a reception committee had an extra-long wait at the San Juan airport while I was being vaccinated for smallpox by the super-efficient American Health Service; unfortunately I didn’t have documentary evidence that it was the second time in six months! Just as Jamaica bore the unmistakable marks of England, so San Juan was undoubtedly American with its wide streets and neon lighting. The great arc lights of the baseball park were the final “yankee” touch.

Early the next morning Rev. Limardo took me by plane across the island to visit the student groups at “Polytechnic”, a junior college under American Presbyterian auspices, and at Mayaguez, the Agricultural and Mechanics division of the University of San

Juan. We then drove back across the island by car, and I could see why they think it the loveliest land in the world. What is happening on the land is perhaps not so beautiful, for Puerto Rico is more densely populated than any place except Java, and that imposes an immense economic strain on the country. The vicious slums along the river side which we went through coming into San Juan were incredible in their filth and degeneration, and I could catch a glimpse along the tattered, mud-holed streets of a terrible but often hidden side of Puerto Rican life.

The next day was Thanksgiving and the students invited me to speak at their customary Thanksgiving service. It meant getting up at five o'clock (four o'clock Jamaican time) for the second consecutive morning, which shook me somewhat, but I managed to arrive in good time and was astounded to find a full student congregation present. It was not easy to talk about Thanksgiving to those from a country which has not seen the best side of American economic aggressiveness, to say the least. After the service we formed a great circle, hand in hand, under the palm trees outside. A few prayers were said, a hymn was sung. Silence, and then we went to breakfast. It had been one of the most unusual, but one of the most impressive Thanksgiving observances I have ever taken part in; partly, I think, because I realized that we are so often, in the land of the big turkeys and cranberry sauce, thankful about the wrong things.

The next morning I set off for Cuba. By good fortune I had a seat next to a retired Episcopal missionary who was returning to introduce his successor to his work in these countries. He told of what a revolution it had been to have contact by air between the islands — weeks had become hours from the time he used to cover his parish by horseback and infrequent boats. But the airplane has other revolutionary significance here; as we came into Ciudad Trujillo we saw the rows and rows of bombers and fighter planes with which Santa Domingo is intimidating and threatening some of its Caribbean neighbors, particularly Haiti. The great danger is that the growing regional consciousness of the Caribbean will be perverted by this kind of friction and conspiracy, undermining even the most elementary democratic achievements gained painfully and slowly throughout that whole area.

As I got out of my plane at the Havana airport I found Agnes Malloy, a friend from General Committee, and a delegation of

students waving to me from a balcony above. Soon we were on our way in her faithful car, "Peregrina", to a dinner with the committee of the Asociacion de Estudiantes Evangelicos Universitarios. Some of us found that our English and Spanish did not quite meet, but all made me feel that I was among friends and that my visit was a welcome one.

Havana struck me as being the most Continental European city which I had yet visited; certainly it was the first real taste of Latin America, with its sidewalk cafes, rhumba bands, excellent but hot Spanish food, and incredibly black coffee! My first introduction to the university life was the news that the students were on strike, barricading themselves in the class rooms. No one seemed particularly disturbed and seemed to accept this method of protesting against unpopular university policies as a matter of course.

Unlike some student groups, the Cubans tend to be overly politically active, if anything. They claim an important rôle in the history of the democratic revolution of their country, they still have considerable influence on government affairs, and they are jealous of their prerogatives within the university — membership on the student council is practically a full-time job. This was the reason for the strike, since the university authorities were intending to demand as a prerequisite for student office the passing of a minimum number of courses in the previous term, and the students did not take kindly to it. Another reason, besides that of time, which has discouraged Christian students from participating in university politics, is the custom of dueling to settle political quarrels. One of the S.C.M. members with a somewhat macabre sense of humour excused his passivity in this sphere by claiming that he was a bad shot!

I was also taken to Matanzas and Cardenas to visit some schools and the united evangelical theological seminary at the former, of which Dr. Rodriguez, a graduate of Princeton Seminary in the United States, is president. One of his hopes, which is shared by many other ecumenically-minded Cuban Christians, is that some kind of national S.C.M. might be established, which would, among other things, help to create a real ecumenical Christian community on the island, at present divided by such artificialities as the western part being Southern Baptist (U.S.A.) and the eastern part Northern Baptist, with the Methodists, Presbyterians and others mixed in between!

Perhaps a step in this direction is being taken by the building of a student centre in Havana. It has been done by the Methodists and is to be under the direction of Agnes Malloy, but it is intended to be open to all Christian students and it will be fully available to the Asociacion de Estudiantes Evangelicos. Dr. Molina, adviser to the Asociacion, and I, representing the W.S.C.F., were present at the formal opening of the center, and the new student officers were also installed at that time.

* * *

The next leg of my journey took me to Guatemala. Last summer word had come from Bob Thorp, a young American Presbyterian "missionary to students", that a student Christian group was in existence in Guatemala City and would welcome contacts with the World's Student Christian Federation. My visit was in response to that invitation. Bob's wife, Bernice, brought me from the airport in time to hear some of the discussion (in Spanish, of course) of a study group that he was leading on Christian doctrine.

My schedule was pleasantly light, since the university was just about to finish its term, but I had some excellent opportunities to see some of the students, their university (which is primarily a small, but well-equipped, medical faculty), and a little of the life of the country. Guatemala is a charming place with a rugged landscape dominated by several great volcanic mountains, small villages, and the native Indians dressed in brilliant, hand-woven clothes representing the various sections of the country. Perhaps unfortunately, these unspoiled charms are making of it a kind of North American tourists' mecca, and how long it will remain relatively uncommercialized is anyone's guess.

More serious for the life of the country, however, is the general cultural revolution which it is undergoing. Even on the paved streets of Guatemala City, the capital, one finds bare-footed peasants, balancing great baskets of fruit, laundry or even live turkeys on their heads, competing in traffic with new Packards and Austins; or one may see a driver and his ox cart resting in the shade of a big Coca-Cola sign. In other words, now they are making in one generation the kind of transition from a primitive rural society to the twentieth century which Europe itself has taken a couple of

centuries to make, and rather disastrously at that. More visible political evidences of this strain may be seen in the shell marks on the front of the government offices in Guatemala City from the unsuccessful revolution last year, or even the ugly bullet holes in the Thorp's kitchen wall, received when Bob became too inquisitive about the progress of a near-by street battle.

The Roman Church is predominant and it too has been affected by the present changes of life. One day we went out to see Antigua, the old Spanish colonial capital, and, though now in ruins, its many impressive monasteries and chapels bear witness to the Roman missionary zeal in the seventeenth century, Antigua being the main centre for Latin America at that time. But in spite of its long history here, the Roman Church has never really been able to radically affect Guatemalan life. Public conveyances are adorned with religious symbols and there are restaurants and shops with such names as "The Sacred Heart of Jesus", but beyond these superficial things little has happened. The peasants may attend Mass, but in the evenings they may also go up and worship at the old pagan shrines on the hilltops, just to be on the safe side. In this situation the educated groups tend to be alienated from the life of the Church, and it is for this reason that Christian work among students is so necessary and important. Even within the "Evangelical" student group of the Thorps there are a surprisingly large number of Roman Catholic students, who find in it one of the only opportunities for relating their intellectual interests to their Christian faith. For the churches in Guatemala to keep pace with the present revolution in the life of their country, it is essential that more and more of their future lay and clerical leadership shall have made this integration, and the S.C.M. is one of the best places for it to happen.

Having left Guatemala without experiencing any revolutions or earthquakes, the last stop on my journey was Mexico City. Since its altitude is over 7,000 feet, it took me some time to feel fully up to the weather and able not to become too easily winded as Gonzalo Baez-Camargo, another General Committee delegate, took me around to my various engagements. The S.C.M. has had a rather precarious existence since its founding through a visit of John R. Mott, and later ones by Robert Mackie and Helen Morton. For a time it had seemed likely to disappear entirely, and it was good news for the Federation to learn that a group of students had reformed a committee

and that a delegate, Gonzalo Baez-Camargo, would be at the General Committee meeting in Canada. During my visit both the students and the senior advisers expressed their conviction that there was an extremely important place for the S.C.M. in Mexico, not only for the life of the students but for the life of the churches and the university themselves.

On one side, the university is being subjected to more and more external and internal pressures which threaten its integrity and character. Both the Roman Catholics and the Communists are struggling for its soul, and either, should they gain control, would severely restrict the academic freedom and political neutrality which it now enjoys. In this tense situation, not only the "evangelical" Christians but also a number of secular, liberal lay and academic leaders see the kind of approach which the S.C.M. represents as one of the only ways out of the dilemma. At least in this case, John Coleman's strictures against "academic neutrality" are being qualified, for in Mexico friends of the S.C.M. see it not as a threat but an ally in helping the university fulfil its true vocation.

On the other side, the S.C.M. has a great responsibility towards the churches. During the great Mexican revolution the Roman Church (which owned over sixty per cent of all real property then) had all its property confiscated by the government, lost its privileged position, its clergy were martyred by Catholic peasants and later forbidden even to appear on the streets in religious garb.

In spite of all these mishaps, it still considers itself as the Church and the Mexican people as its children. It is, therefore, hostile to religious freedom, on the grounds that anything which tends to "divide the nation" or "poison the minds of the people" should be resisted. Unfortunately, the Protestant evangelicals fall into this category and the number of their deaths and the destruction to their chapels at the hands of Roman Catholic mobs would probably be greater were it not for the technical guarantees of religious freedom granted in the Mexican constitution.

Furthermore, the Roman Church in Mexico, as in so many other parts of Latin America, is degenerate and corrupt, a matter of admitted concern for many devout and intelligent Romans themselves. On Guadalupe Day (the patron saint of Mexico) we went out to see the shrine and the various celebrations. The crowds were immense, with peasants coming in from all parts of the country,

and the confusion was unimaginable, with rockets being shot off, merry-go-rounds and ferris-wheels in action, side-shows playing, shooting galleries banging (in which the main target was the devil), and every kind of food and trinket vendor raucously selling his wares. All this was within a stone's throw of the shrine, and the whole impression was one of a slightly disreputable carnival rather than any spiritual observance.

But the Protestant evangelicals also have their limitations. Denominationalism is very strong, and this divisiveness is exaggerated by the sterile theological deadlock between a watered-down liberalism and a static orthodox dogmatism. "Paucos i dividios" — few and divided — is how someone has characterized the evangelicals, and it is an all too apt summary of their present spiritual situation. One feels that here within a narrow compass are all of the basic ecumenical issues facing the Federation as a whole today, and it is worth noting that the students not only in Mexico, but in Guatemala and Puerto Rico, seemed to feel that of the projects of the Federation, our work on ecumenical problems is the most relevant to their particular setting and future work. They must decide, in a quite practical way for their every-day work, whether the nominal Roman Catholic is a real Christian and whether the church from which he comes is really a part of the Body of Christ, or is only a facade which bears certain superficial marks of the true Church. Then, too, how can the S.C.M. be an ecumenical pioneer, helping to lubricate the static relations between the various evangelical bodies, without itself "being lost" by becoming isolated from the ordinary life of the churches and tending, therefore, to become a kind of new sect itself.

One day I was asked to come to a newly organized congregation in Guatemala City to give an "edifying sermon", because, as the member inviting me said, they had had all too much of "sin, judgment and damnation". I do not know whether I succeeded, but it summarized for me the real need of the Church in these parts. The task which lies ahead is the building up — the edifying — of the Christian community into the real Body of Christ — its parts in harmony with one another and forming an obedient Body which can do the work of God which is required in the world today. That work is, of course, the work of the Holy Spirit, as are all good works. And because it is, it will also enable the Church to be truly "evangelical"

without being that in a divisive way. At the Y.M.C.A. rural rehabilitation centre at "Camohmila" in Mexico the director has placed outside several piles of corn, the fruit of the different varieties being tried out. Only in this way, he says, will the sceptical peasants be convinced of the superiority of any one variety and begin to use it themselves. So it is with the Church in the Caribbean and Central America. Only when it begins to bear some of the rich fruits of the Spirit — one of which is unity — will it begin to be a really missionary, evangelistic Church, so that men seeing its good works "will glorify your Father in heaven".

BOOK REVIEWS

CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY, by Alan Paton. Jonathan Cape, London. 9s. 6d.

LA VINGT-CINQUIÈME HEURE, by C. Virgil Gheorghiu, translated into French from the Rumanian by M. Saint-Come. Librairie Plon, Paris. Swiss Fr. 6.—.

Few books have impressed me more than two novels I have had the good fortune to read during recent months. The one is *Cry, the Beloved Country*, by Alan Paton, and the other *La vingt-cinquième heure* by C. Virgil Gheorghiu. It may seem strange to write in the same review about two books of such diverse origin and subject, but the very similarity of the agony they both express, though in varying degrees, compels me to do so. The crisis of our day, whether political, social or international, is but the fruit of a civilisation which has cheapened human lives, and sometimes entire populations, in the interest of technological development, of production and national prestige. In a world where prejudices and propaganda have come gradually to form public opinion and to group men according to distinct and often hostile categories, there seems to be no further room for a genuine love which transcends these categories. On rare occasions an individual is found who gives living expression to that love which reaches out towards the man *himself* — the living man who exists under all racial, national or party labels ; such an individual inevitably runs into the more or less insurmountable obstacle of a world which will not, nay, cannot believe in that love — as in Alan Paton's novel — or, still more terrible, as Gheorghiu depicts him, finds himself a prisoner in a world which with its technological civilisation has gradually killed man as he is and substituted the "citizen", an automatic creature who is unmoved by all but automatic reactions.

I am sure that anyone who reads *Cry, the Beloved Country* must be stirred by the searching way in which the tragedy of the races in South Africa is depicted. It is a story which is great in its very simplicity and sobriety. As we follow the Zulu pastor,

who is the hero, on his agonising search for his son in the great city of Johannesburg, we come to understand something of the conditions of life in that atmosphere of political and ideological tension which today prevails in South Africa. The complexity of that wider drama is revealed in the inner conflict and life tragedy of both white and black characters of the book. There is no bitterness here, no partisan passion ; only authentic suffering born of an intimate understanding of the bearings of that conflict for the men who are its victims. On both sides fear prevails — “the bondage of fear and the fear of bondage” — fear which hardens hearts and sows hatred. On the very last page we read these words which sum up the anguished question that runs through the whole book :

“And such fear could not be cast out but by love. It was Msimangu who had said, Msimangu who had no hate for any man, I have one great fear in my heart, that one day when they turn to loving they will find we are turned to hating.”

The reader of this book is sure to find that its significance extends far beyond South Africa, is indeed universal. It puts a question to every Christian man or woman. Have we waited until it is too late — or have we perhaps not even begun — to learn that the world is dying for lack of love, that we must be surprised to find that if we come too late to love, hatred is there before us ; and that the only answer is to love the men whom Christ loved and to go on loving them ?

Too late ! In Paton’s novel the words come as an anguished question. The book ends with a ray of hope :

“Yes, it is the dawn that has come. The titihoya wakes from sleep, and goes about its work of forlorn crying. The sun tips with light the mountains of Ingeli and East Griqualand. The great valley of the Umzimkulu is still in darkness, but the light will come there. Ndotsheni is still in darkness, but the light will come there also. For it is the dawn that has come, as it has come for a thousand centuries, never failing. But when that dawn will come, of our emancipation, from the fear of bondage and the bondage of fear, why that is a secret.”

In *La vingt-cinquième heure*, on the other hand, it is found as an affirmation, as the expression of European despair at its height : “For it is twenty-five o’clock. The moment when all

attempts at rescue have become useless. Even the coming of a Messiah would solve nothing. It isn't the last hour : it's one hour after the last hour." This book also is poignant in its truthfulness. The author has himself experienced most of the situations and agonies he describes, or similar ones. Indeed the entire book is but the painful expression of an experience which was at the time almost unbearable and has ended by becoming an obsession. Man has lost the right to existence on this earth. He has become the prey of the machine, whether it be of a mechanised totalitarian régime or of a democratic bureaucracy. Man — the individual with a personality — has been replaced by a number, automatically classed in a category : he is only part of a category.

The heroes of this book are two Rumanians who spend some fifteen years in different concentration camps. One of them is a peasant, falsely arrested as a Jew under the Nazi régime, the other is an intellectual arrested by the Croats.

So men are at the mercy of political fluctuations, of a change in the occupying powers, or other arbitrary conditions ; they are in turn ill-treated, arrested or honoured according to their classification in some category or other. What they *are* in reality, or what they have been able to *do* (for example to help prisoners to escape) is never the determining factor in their fate. The one thing that counts is their quality as citizens of a certain nation or of none, their existence as it is classified in multiple files which are frequently false : they are the slaves of a civilisation which is more cruel than primitive barbarism : "Men are trying to save society by a logical order, while it is just this order which is killing it. That is the crime of western technological society. It is killing the living man, sacrificing him to theory, to abstraction, to planning. Here is the modern type of human sacrifice. The stake and the autodafé have given place to the office and statistics — those two social myths of the present day which consume human sacrifices in their flames... In contemporary society human sacrifice is no longer worth mentioning, it is something so banal. Human life is only of value in so far as it is a source of energy. Standards are purely scientific. That is the law of our sombre technological barbarism."

This book is a cry of alarm. As we read these pages which describe, as so many others do, the horrors of war, it is impossible

to avoid being impressed by the diagnosis they contain, reaching as it does far beyond the military machine and the barbed wire of the concentration camp. It is particularly painful to find how deeply in our ordinary life and even in the activities of our churches and Christian movements we are contaminated by the disease of the century and how unmistakably our behaviour in the world and in the Church is that of slaves of a society which regards men only in relation to their special capacities, their power of work and their production value. What we require is the spontaneous and free expression of love, like that of Traian who stands helplessly in the drenching rain while his friend's fiancée is carried off. "When he analysed his action Traian told himself that he would do the same again in a parallel situation in the future. It was the need to share the agony of his comrade, even if his help was of no practical use, even if it was all for nothing... God too made a useless gesture like this, when He created the universe. God made things of no practical utility ; yet these are the most beautiful things. The life of man is a useless creation... Yet in spite of his inutility it is quite unsurpassable."

On another page the author strikingly paints the drama of the Redemption when he describes the haphazard altar and cardboard figure of Christ in the camp chapel.

And yet there is a question which pursues the reader throughout the reading of the book : To whom does the twenty-fifth hour belong ? Is it not God who alone knows what will take place at the twenty-fifth hour ? Is it not *His* hour, which no human being can imagine nor therefore describe ? Is this hour which is designated by the author as the twenty-fifth, not rather to be thought of as the twenty-fourth even in its last minutes ?

La vingt-cinquième heure will not fail to move all who would understand the world they are living in and the men they have to deal with. Like *Cry, the Beloved Country*, it is a work which deserves to be read and discussed widely in student circles.

M.-J. DE H.